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Flatpicking Guitar Magazine

Volume 15, Number 4 May/June 2011

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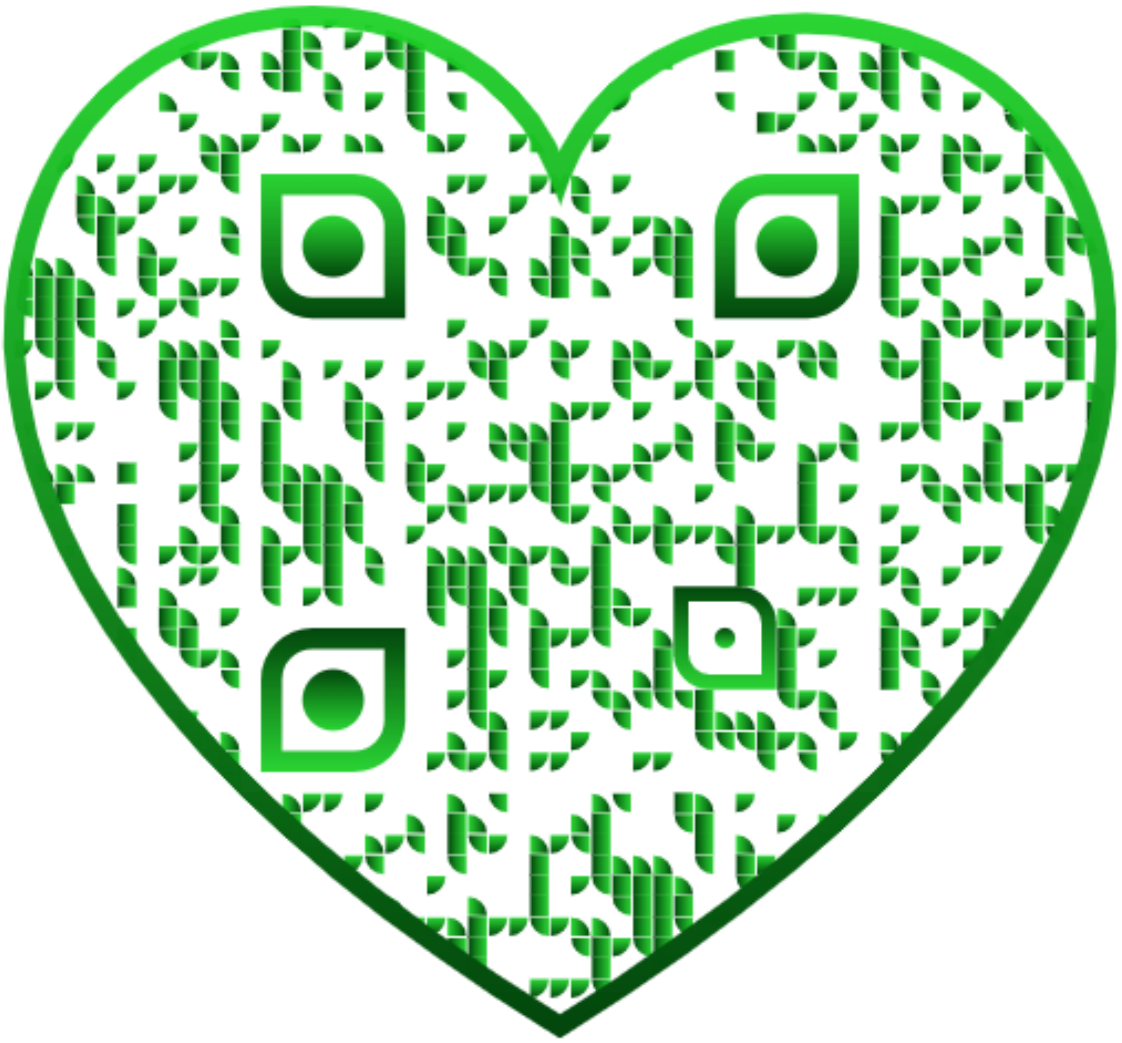

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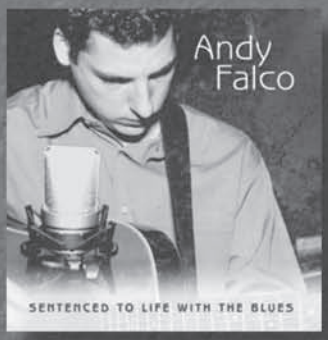

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In the "Pioneers" issue of *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* Dan Miller laid out a flatpicking learning method that followed the chronological development of the style. This step-by-step method started with a solid foundation in the rhythm guitar styles of flatpicking's early pioneers—a style that includes a liberal use of bass runs and rhythm fill licks, combined with rhythmic strums. Volume 1 of the Eight Volume *Flatpicking Essentials* series teaches this rhythm style and prepares you for each future volume. If you want to learn how to add interesting bass runs and fill licks to your rhythm playing, check out this 96-page book with accompanying CD. This book and CD are available in spiral bound hardcopy form, on CD-Rom, or as a digital download.

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Flatpicking Essentials Volume 3: Flatpicking Fiddle Tunes

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Are you having trouble learning how to improvise? To many flatpickers the art of improvisation is a mystery. In the 5th Volume of the *Flatpicking Essentials* series you will study various exercises that will begin to teach you the process of improvisation through the use of a graduated, step-by-step method. Through the study and execution of these exercises, you will learn how to free yourself from memorized solos! This Volume also includes "style studies" which examine the contributions of the flatpicking legends, such as Doc Watson, Clarence White, Tony Rice, Norman Blake, Dan Crary, Pat Flynn, and others. Learn techniques that helped define their styles and learn how to apply those techniques to your own solos.

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Flatpicking Essentials Volume 6: Improvisation Part II & Advanced Technique

Flatpicking Essentials, Volume 6 is divided into two main sections. The first section is Part II of our study of improvisation. Volume 5 introduced readers to a step-by-step free-form improv study method that we continue here in Volume 6.

The second section of this book is focused on advanced flatpicking technique. We approached this topic by first having Tim May record "advanced level" improvisations for nineteen different flatpicking tunes. Tim selected the tunes and went into the studio with a list of techniques, like the use of triplets, natural and false harmonics, note bending, quoting, alternate tuning, syncopation, twin guitar, minor key tunes, hybrid picking, advanced crosspicking, string skipping, etc. There are a ton of absolutely awesome flatpicking arrangements by Tim May in this book, with explanations of each technique.

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Flatpicking Essentials Volume 7: Advanced Rhythm & Chord Studies

Flatpicking Essentials, Volume 7 is a 170 page book, with 67 audio tracks, that will show you how to add texture, variety, and movement to your rhythm accompaniment in the context of playing bluegrass, fiddle tune music, folk music, acoustic rock, Western swing, big band swing, and jazz. The best part of this book is that it doesn't just present you with arrangements to memorize. It teaches you how you can create and execute your own accompaniment arrangements in a variety of musical styles. Don't rely on the arrangements of others, learn a straight-forward and gradual approach to designing your own rhythm accompaniment.

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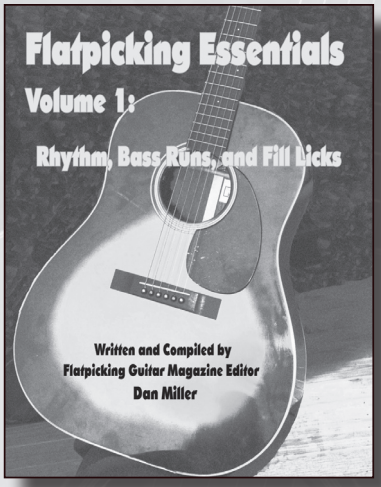

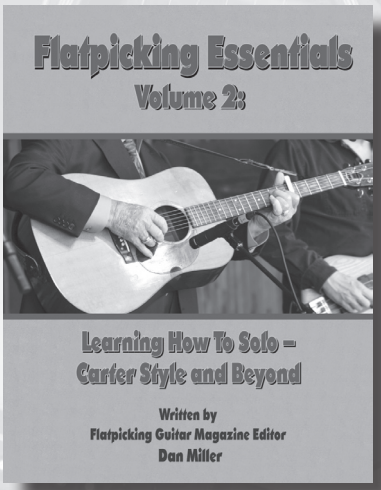

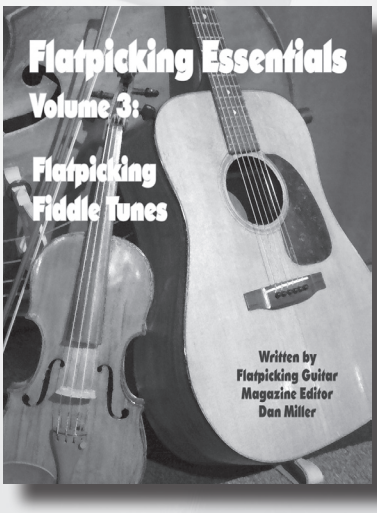

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EDITOR'S PAGE

It's Outdoor Festival Season!

We are getting ready to kick off our outdoor festival season with our annual trip to Merlefest in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. From there we have a very busy summer of events planned this year. We would love to see you when we are out there on the road, so if you are attending any of the festivals listed below, please come by the booth and say "hello"! Here are the events that we currently plan to attend:

Merlefest, Wilkesboro, North Carolina (April)
Houstonfest, Galax, Virginia (May)
Gettysburg Bluegrass Festival, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (May)
Tri-State Bluegrass Festival, Kendallville, Indiana (May)
Huck Finn's Jubilee, Victorville, California (June)
Red, White, and Bluegrass Festival, Morganton, North Carolina (July)
Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival, Oak Hill, New York (July)
Thomas Point Beach Bluegrass Festival, Brunswick, Maine (Sept)
Walnut Valley Festival, Winfield, Kansas (Sept)

We may be adding a couple of more to the list as the year progresses. At each event we will have all of the *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* back issues that are still in inventory available for sale Additionally, we will have all of the books and videos that are currently in our catalog. So, come on out and visit with us!

New Improvisation DVD

Tim May and I have just released a new instructional DVD on Improvisation. We have titled it *An Approach to Improvisation* and it is now available at flatpickingmercantile.com. The goal of this DVD is to give any guitar student the tools that they will need in order to sit in at a jam session and improvise solos on songs and tunes that they may have never heard before. If this seems like a daunting task to you, check out this DVD. Equipped with the right tools, techniques, concepts, and ideas, it is easier than you think!

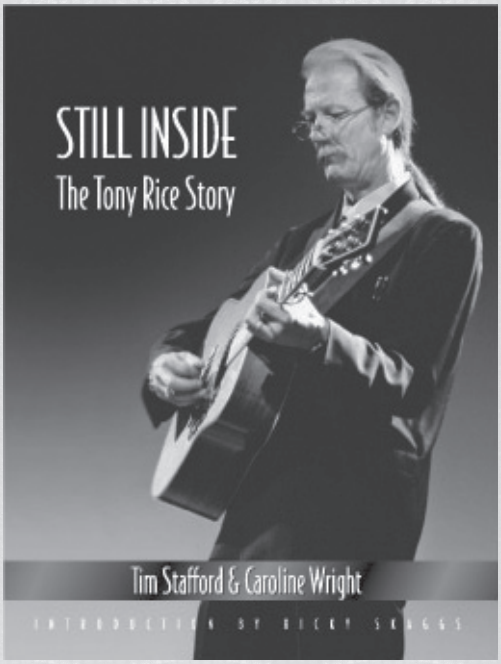
Participants at our improvisation workshops are able to improvise a solo on a song that they are never heard before after about 30 minutes of instruction and practice, even if they have no previous experience with improvisation. This video is for players at all levels. Our philosophy is that even if you are a beginner, now is the time to start practicing improvisation! Tim and I will also be out this summer teaching our improvisation workshops for guitar and mandolin. Check www.flatpick.com/workshops for our schedule.

Flatpicking Guitar Magazine Podcast

We are now broadcasting a new Podcast every month Interviews, flatpicking tunes, and more. Check it out: http://www.flatpick.com/podcast.html

Now Available! Two New Biographical Books covering flatpicking guitar's two most influential performers: Tony Rice and Doc Watson!

Still Inside:
The Tony Rice Story
by Tim Stafford & Caroline Wright



A decade in the making, Still Inside: The Tony Rice Story delivers Tony's tale in his own inimitable words, and in anecdotes and observations from his friends, family, fans, and fellow musicians.

Tony's long road has taken him from coast to coast and around the world, through historic recordings and appearances that often profoundly move those who experience them. More than 100 people were interviewed for this book, sharing memories of Tony and discussing his indelible impact on their own music. Alison Krauss, J.D. Crowe, Sam Bush, Béla Fleck, Jerry Douglas, Ricky Skaggs, David Grisman, Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Peter Rowan, and many others contribute intimate stories and frank observations of this private, enigmatic man.

In the book's final chapter, co-author Tim Stafford—a highly respected acoustic guitarist in his own right—provides insight into Tony's technique, timing, right hand, choice of picks, and much more. Tim also discusses Tony's prize possession, the 1935 Martin D-28 Herringbone guitar formerly owned by the great Clarence White.

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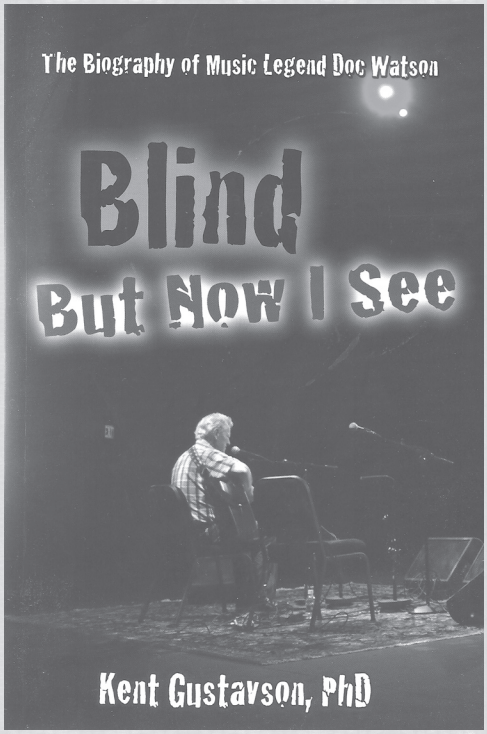

Blind But Now I See:
The Biography of Music Legend Doc Watson
by Kent Gustavson

From the day he stepped off the bus in New York City, North Carolina music legend Doc Watson changed the music world forever. His influence has been recognized by presidents and by the heroes of modern music, from country stars to rock and roll idols. This is a biography of a flatpicking legend.

Featuring brand new interviews with:
- Ben Harper of The Innocent Criminals
- Ketch Secor of Old Crow Medicine Show
- Pat Donohue of The Prairie Home Companion
- David Grisman of Garcia/Grisman and Old and in the Way
- Sam Bush, The Father of Newgrass
- Guy Clark, Texas Songwriting Legend
- Michelle Shocked, Greg Brown, Mike Marshall, Tom Paxton, Maria Muldaur
- And many more!

Both Books are Available at www.flatpickingmercantile.com

Bob Minner

by Dan Miller

For nearly nineteen years Bob Minner has toured and recorded with country music superstar Tim McGraw as a member of McGraw's Dance Hall Doctors — a pretty solid gig for a bluegrass flatpicker from Missouri! As if playing the acoustic guitar on stage behind Tim McGraw isn't opportunity enough, through his relationship with the McGraw band, Bob has also had the opportunity to play behind many other very famous musicians and performers, including guys like Elton John and Tony Bennett.

Now, after nearly two decades performing and recording top 40 country, Bob has returned to his roots with the release of a solo album titled *There & Back & Back Again*. Bob said, "It is a full circle thing for me. I'm getting back to the music that brought me to the dance." Regarding his vision for the recording, Bob said, "I want this recording to appeal to people who love flatpicking, but I also want to take flatpicking to the McGraw fans. I'm hoping to reach those country music fans who have never heard this kind of music."

Like many of the artist who we feature in *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*, Bob Minner grew up playing bluegrass music and learning how to flatpick by studying the recordings of the flatpicking legends. Bob's father was a Roscoe Holcomb fan and so Bob had a banjo in his hands before his sixth birthday. By the time he was seven he had seen Doc Watson and Merle Watson perform live, and by the age of eight or nine he was "messing around" with the guitar.

As a ten-year-old Bob was already playing the banjo on a radio program and had joined a bluegrass gospel group. Before his twelfth birthday he was learning Doc Watson and Norman Blake licks off of record albums and then he went on to discover players like Dudley Murphy, Dan Crary, Charles Sawtelle, and Tony Rice by the time he was fourteen. Not long after that Bob was entering, and winning, local guitar contests.

Throughout his high school years Bob continued to focus on the guitar. In addition to playing in bands, jamming at festivals, and entering contests, hightlights of Bob's teenage years included opportunities to hang out at Jimmy Martin's house and learn about bluegrass rhythm guitar from the bluegrass rhythm master, and jamming with one of his flatpick heroes, Charles Sawtelle, at a bluegrass festival in Independence, Missouri. "Charles really showed me it was cool to go out on a limb and play a solo in an unexpected context, and still pull it off as part of a band. Of course, his rhythm playing is legendary. Younger players should really look into what Charles left us

with his playing." At the age of nineteen Bob entered the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship in Winfield, Kansas. He didn't place that year, but he learned a lot about competition at the national level. Bob went back to Winfield the next two years and placed 3rd each year (1986 and 1987) in the prestigious contest.

Through a friend who had moved to Nashville, Bob met Tim McGraw and by the fall of 1992 he was a member of McGraw's up-and-coming band. This coming fall (2011) Bob will complete his 19th year with the McGraw band. Bob said, "Playing with Tim McGraw is a great gig. It is more than I ever expected to do with music when I was younger. The time has come and gone pretty quick." In addition to performing about 65 to 85 shows a year and recording with McGraw, Bob has spent a lot of time over the past few years writing vocal songs and instrumental tunes. Highlights have included a song co-written by Tim Stafford that was recorded by Shannon Slaughter, a song co-written by Shawn Lane that was recorded by Blue Highway, and a song co-written by Ronnie Bowman that was recorded by Dailey and Vincent.

Although Bob has a lot going on in his musical life, he has also found time to record a guitar album featuring all original material. Bob said, "I wanted this to be a flatpicking guitar record, but I didn't want it to be a bunch of rehashed fiddle tunes and bluegrass songs." The recording features a variety of original tunes that range from melodic arrangements with a laid back groove to "real barn burners." Joining Bob on the recording are Rob Ickes (Blue Highway) on Dobro, Andy Leftwich (Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder) on mandolin and fiddle, and Mark Fain (Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder) on bass. Additionally, Shawn Lane sings on the one vocal tune that appears on the recording and Bob's son, Zack, plays drums on four tracks.

Regarding his song selection on the recording, Bob said, "If all I ever played was bluegrass flatpicking, then that is probably the kind of CD that I would have made. But over the past twenty years I have had so much other music in my ears that all of that music comes out as well. I look at it as a landscape of the different kinds of music that have influenced me over the years."

The guitar playing on Bob's CD is all acoustic and ranges from Latin rhythms, to bluegrass breakdowns, to slow melodic numbers, to just plain feel good grooving tunes. It is a wonderful statement about the acoustic guitar's possibilities when played in the flatpick style. Although there is a variety of music that Bob explores here, all of it is music that any fan of the acoustic guitar can really enjoy. None of the cuts go "too far out." It is all enjoyable and accessible music. Bob said, "It is a broad view of where my head has been at musically over the past few years." On this recording Bob plays a Bourgeois Country Boy Deluxe, a Bourgeois "Banjo Killer" Slope D, a 1996 Bourgeois sunburst Slope D (this one is his road guitar), a 1996 Bourgeois OM, and a Taylor nylon string classical guitar.

While Bob hopes that this recording is something that flatpicking guitar players will enjoy, one of the reasons that he wanted to record this project was to give Tim McGraw fans an opportunity to hear what he does outside of the McGraw band setting. Bob said, "I would love to help the McGraw fans discover other things musically, so with this recording I'm hoping to reach people who have never heard this kind of acoustic music. Those fans don't know what I do on the side of flatpicking and bluegrass, so I want this recording to be something I can use to connect with them in a different way. Tim has given me a great opportunity and platform to express myself musically, both on stage with him, and in any solo context."

Bob Minner is not the first guy to grow up playing bluegrass and then move on to work in country music. When asked about making that move, Bob said, "Many of the most proficient side guys in country music have come from bluegrass. Brad Davis spending all those years working with Marty Stuart is an example of that. I think that playing bluegrass is kind of like getting a college education. When you move from bluegrass to country you've developed some talent and you come in with both guns blazing. I think that learning to play 'Blackberry Blossom' like Norman Blake and learning a few 'out of the box' solos from guys like Charles Sawtelle, and studying Tony Rice's approach to the guitar prepares a guitar player for anything that they may be called on to perform in the country music setting."

Although Bob feels like growing up playing bluegrass gave him the foundation that he needed in order to play professionally in the world of country music, he says that he has also continued to learn and grow as a guitarist in his role as Tim McGraw's acoustic guitar player. He said, "Working with Tim has given me a better sense of what it takes to perform in the context of a band. Tim McGraw hired me as a rhythm player, not someone who was going to go out there and rip out 'Sally Goodin' or 'Forked Deer.' I think one of the biggest

Bob Minner (far left) with Tim McGraw and the Dance Hall Doctors

Bob Minner performing at Morgan Music in October 2010 with Dale Martin (left) and Bull Harman (right)

lessons I learned when I started this job was that you don't have to try and conquer the world with every lick. In this band, playing a little goes a long way. The spectrum of the kinds of rhythm and rhythm patterns that I've learned how to play with this band is very broad. A big part of this job is knowing my role and my place in an eight piece band. I have to know how to feel the groove and get right into the pocket so that what I am doing jells with the band and supports the singer. I have to be a rhythmic chameleon in order to lock in with that. My goal is to fit in so well that the audience doesn't know I'm there unless I quit playing and they then notice an important element of the sound is missing."

Working in the context of a band to help make an important contribution to the overall sound of that band is Bob's number one goal when he is on stage or in the studio. He said, "The recording that flipped the switch in my mind about working together as a band was the Flatt and Scruggs *Live at Carnegie Hall* recording. They were all playing around one microphone and they were really working together as a band. They knew how to create a cohesive blend by staying out of each other's way.

With Tim McGraw's band the strength is not necessarily in the individual talent of each player. Our great strength is in the realization that we can say more if we stay out of each other's way. The same was true of the Bluegrass Album Band. The reason they sounded so great was because they knew how to work as a band. Young bands can hear it, but they don't always know how to get there. It is hard to learn how to support what the other members of the band are doing. It takes some work and a great deal of awareness."

When asked why he thinks that Tim McGraw wanted to have an acoustic rhythm player as part of a band that already includes electric guitar, full percussion, and keyboards, Bob said, "The sound of the acoustic guitar gets back to the most basic element of the song creation process, which is usually the songwriter sitting down with an acoustic guitar. The earthy, organic equation of the singer and the acoustic guitar is the most basic element of this music. The rhythm acoustic guitar provides this six string blanket of sound that connects with the singer in a way that the other instruments can't and provides a texture and a landscape to the music that the listener would miss if it wasn't there."

After spending nearly nineteen years playing on stage and in the studio with a mainstream country music act, Bob has taken all he has learned in that setting and applied it to the music on his new CD. Bob said, "I think that this new flatpicking guitar recording demonstrates the benefits of the experiences that I have brought back from the years I've spent playing country music. These are musical expressions that I don't think I would have had if I had of continued playing only bluegrass. I grew up on the old flatpicking records and I love that stuff and I have a great respect for it. However, I feel that part of the responsibility of any artist is to move the music forward. So, on this recording I'm going back to my roots in one sense, but I'm also trying to help push it forward by adding in some of the influences that I've experience in my career. For me, that makes the experience of coming back to do a flatpicking record at this time in my life so much sweeter."

Bob Minner is somewhat unique in the world of flatpicking guitar players in that he has spent so much of his career performing mainstream music. Many roots music fans and performers feel that the music on top 40 country radio is too commercial, very over-produced, and watered-down for mass appeal. Since he has been on both sides of the fence, I asked Bob what he thought the biggest misconception musicians who play bluegrass might have about playing in a big-time country band. Bob said, "To any musicians who might say that players who perform in bands like ours 'don't have any substance,' I would say, 'Come out and do my job for just one night and let me know how you feel afterward.' There is a lot more to playing commercial music than you might think."

Bob continued, "I think that some flatpickers do themselves an injustice by not listening to other kinds of music and working to incorporate elements of that music in what they do. You can learn a lot by opening up your ears and listening. I also think that people forget that Clarence played with the Byrds. Also, there are a bunch of other flatpickers who have been in commercial bands…Brad Davis with Marty Stuart, Jim Hurst with Trish Yearwood, Robert Bowlin with Kathy Mattea, Keith Sewell with the Dixie Chicks and Lyle Lovett, not to mention all of the commercial sessions that Bryan Sutton has participated in. Even the great Norman Blake played rhythm for Johnny Cash in the *Johnny Cash Show* series. I think that if you asked any of them about the experience, they will tell you that it helped push them forward as guitar players and musicians."

Regarding Bryan Sutton's success in Nashville, Bob said, "Bryan's great playing with Ricky Skaggs put him on the map, that is no secret. What some may not realize is that the thing that has kept him on the map as a session player in Nashville is his ability to be a great rhythm player in any studio setting. Bryan has the ability to go into the studio on any session, no matter how country or how progressive, and fit right

into the pocket and play something that fits the tune and fits the singer. The rhythm is what carries the song, not the solos. Being able to play a bunch of hot licks will only get you so far…I'd like to see more guitarist focusing on their rhythm than learning how to play hot solos. In other words, good rhythm players always find work. Being just a hot lead player will usually not get you as far in this business."

In summarizing the music that he has recorded on his new CD, Bob said, "I view my original music as being very melody-based. It is not technically hard to play. I didn't want to put out a recording of hot licks and technically challenging guitar solos. There is already a lot of that out there and I can only do what I do with the musical voice that I have developed. The overall landscape of the song is what I want the listener to enjoy. I feel that in creating this music I took what I knew about melodic structure and made the best recording that I could make. And I'm glad that I waited nearly twenty years to come out with a solo CD because I think this recording represents all of the musical experiences that I've had during those years."

Bob also feels that the time he has spent with Tim McGraw has opened up the doors that helped facilitate putting his new CD together. He said, "I'm not an iconic flatpicker. Music took me in a different direction. However, I love flatpicking and bluegrass music. It is what inspired me when I was young and it still inspires me to this day. I have had a really great time going back to my roots and recording a project with Rob Ickes, Andy Leftwich, and Mark Fain. Had I stayed in Missouri playing bluegrass I don't know that I would have ever had the chance to make a recording with guys that are this talented. I would have been a fan of theirs, but I don't think I would have ever gotten to know them. So, once again, it is a full circle experience for me."

Although Bob has owned a number of great guitars over the years, these days he can always be found with a Bourgeois guitar in his hands. The Bourgeois Guitar Company does not give guitars away to professional players. Bob has purchased each of the Bourgeois guitars that he owns and he wanted to make sure to thank Alvin Deskins at Morgan Music in Lebanon, Missouri, for being his "go to guy" every time he has purchased a new Bourgeois.

Later this year Bob will be out on the road teaching clinics for Bourgeois Guitars.

Bob Minner performing at Morgan Music Grand Re-opening Event in October 2010

When asked about the content of the clinics, Bob said, "I want to share information about how the Bourgeois guitars are built. I have had extensive visits with Dana Bourgeois and we've talked about what makes these guitars sound the way they do. I think I have more knowledge to share about the guitars than the average guy who just picks the guitar. I chose to play the Bourgeois guitar because it has the versatility to fit into a bluegrass setting and then also fit with what I play with Tim McGraw. So, I don't have to take out an old D-18 to play bluegrass, and then bring out a stock "plug-in" guitar on stage with the country band, and then have a third guitar that I use in the studio. The Bourgeois is equally adept with all of it."

Although the majority of Bob's workshop presentation will be about Bourgeois guitars, he also hopes to expand the discussing to include flatpicking technique.

When selecting a tune from Bob's new CD to tab out for this issue, Bob thought it would be a good idea to highlight one that "moves along pretty good." The song he selected is titled "First Hog to the Trough." You can hear Bob, and the awesome band that he used on this CD, on the audio companion that accompanies this issue and you will find a transcription of Bob's two solos on the pages that follow.

Look for Bob's new CD *There & Back & Back Again* at www.flatpickingmercantile.com

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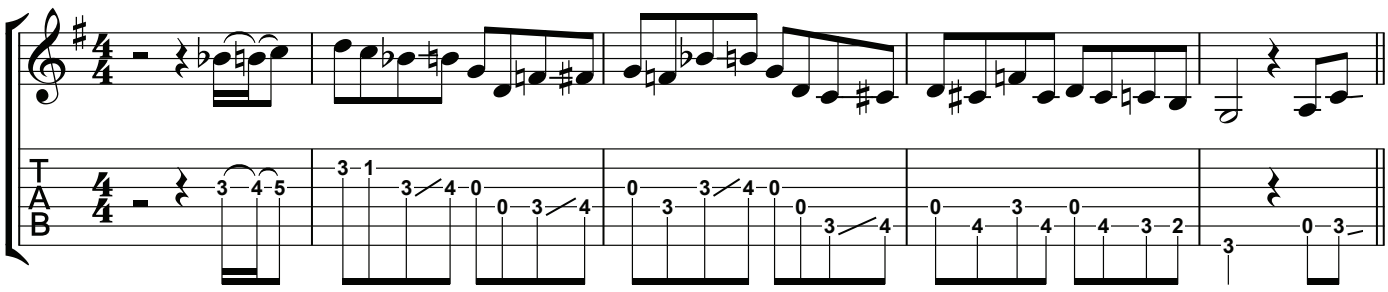
Audio CD
Track 3

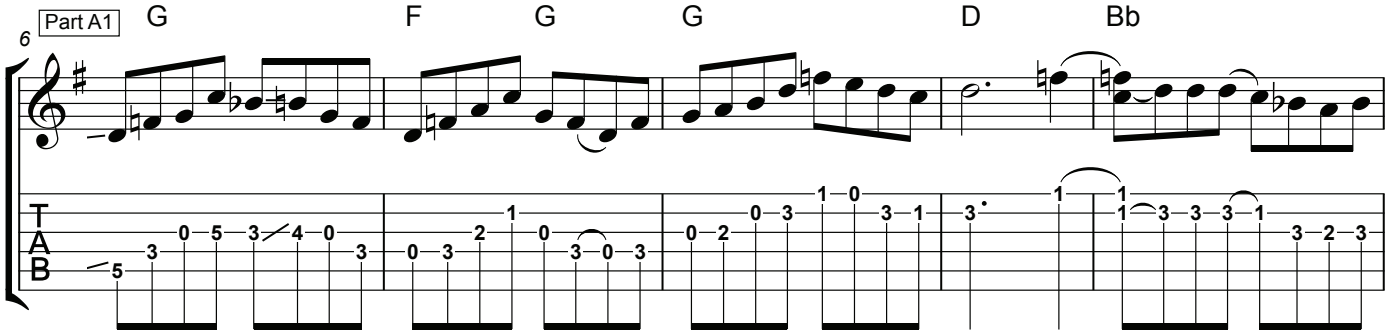
First Hog to the Trough

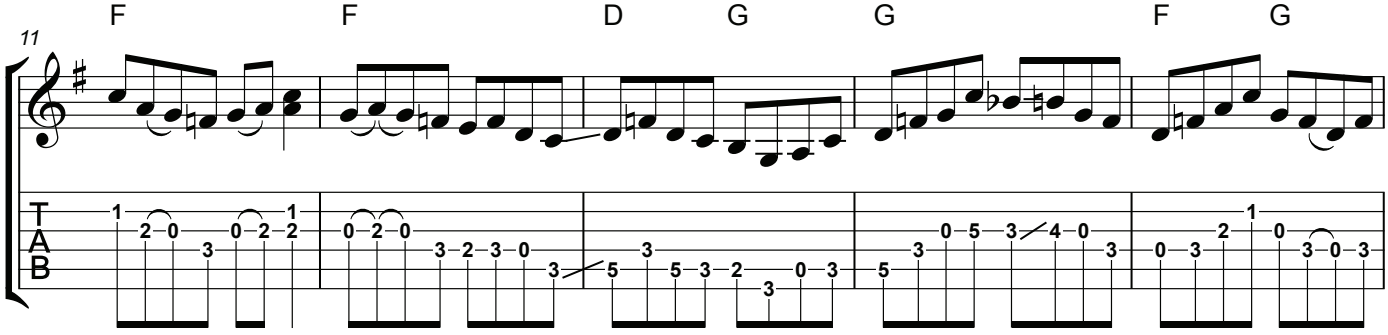
Written by Bob Minner

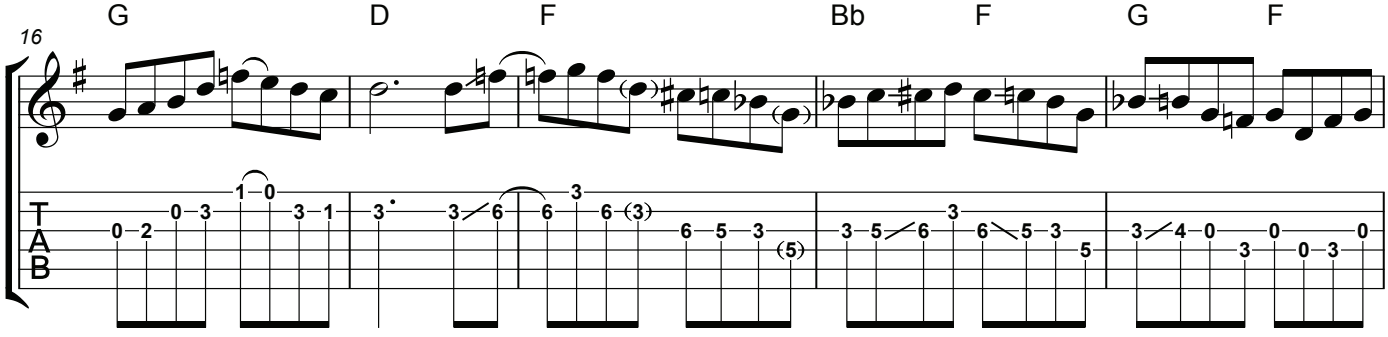
♩ = 274 Intro

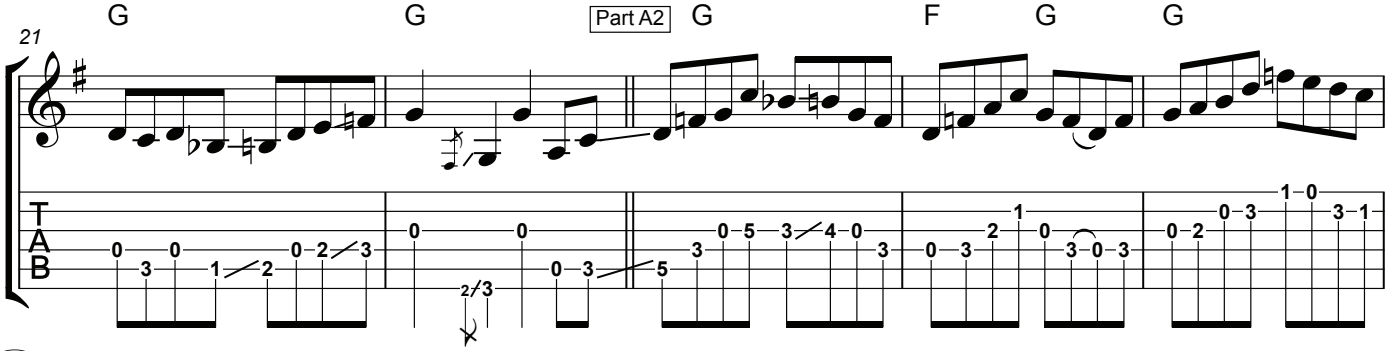


Part A1









First Hog to the Trough (con't)

First Hog to the Trough (con't)

First Hog to the Trough (con't)

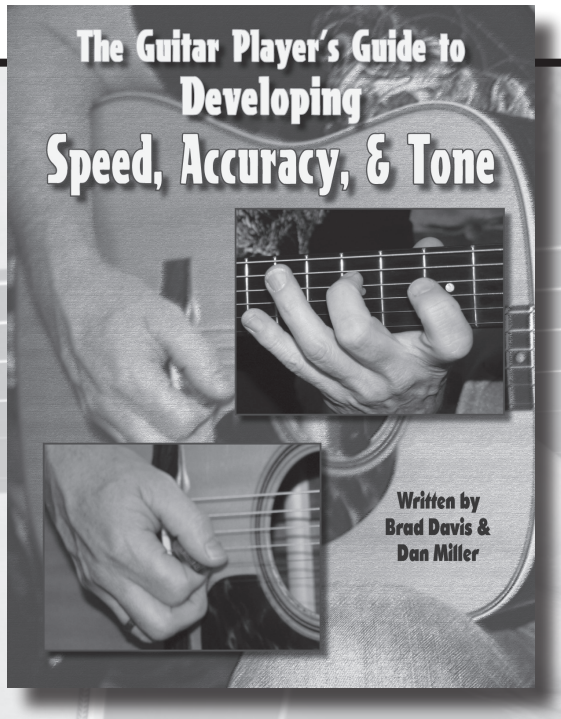
Loch Leven Castle

BY CRAIG VANCE

Here's another tune that Norman Blake recorded a while back that always sounded to me as if it were an ancient tune from some faraway land. I've only heard a few variations on this tune, but came up with what seemed to work the best for guitar. Located in Loch Leven, Scotland, in the Perth and Kinross region, the actual castle is on Castle Island. This tune can be successfully blended with other minor tunes in either Am, Dm, or Em.

The Guitar Player's Guide to Developing
Speed, Accuracy, & Tone

by Brad Davis & Dan Miller



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Loch Leven Castle

Arranged by Craig Vance

Loch Leven Castle (con't)

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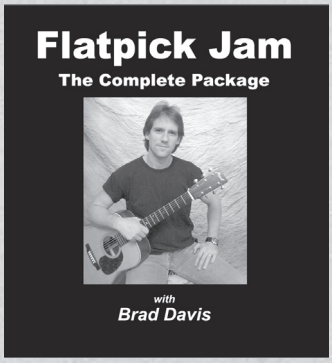

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Bluegrass Rhythm Guitar

by Joe Carr

Carter's Blues

Here is a great example of rhythm and lead guitar played together in an attractive complete sounding style. This song was originally recorded by the Carter family as a vocal with guitar lead played by Maybelle Carter. It was made a bluegrass guitar standard by Larry Sparks on his *John Deere Tractor* album. Sparks is perhaps one of the most underrated lead bluegrass guitar players. His years with Ralph Stanley are well represented in his own music. His recordings often feature his bluesy guitar style in an up-front role. He certainly deserves more attention. Many of his recordings are available on iTunes. I owe many thanks to Gerald Jones for his playing on the accompanying CD. This tune was recorded in A with the capo at the second fret. The open G chord with the open B (2nd) string is used throughout.

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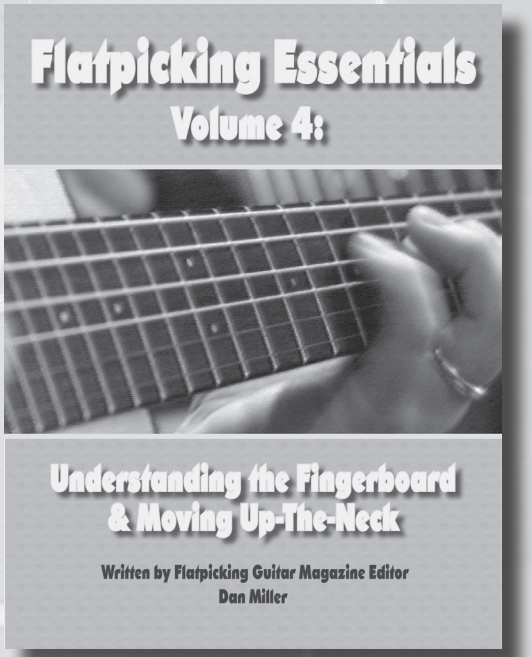

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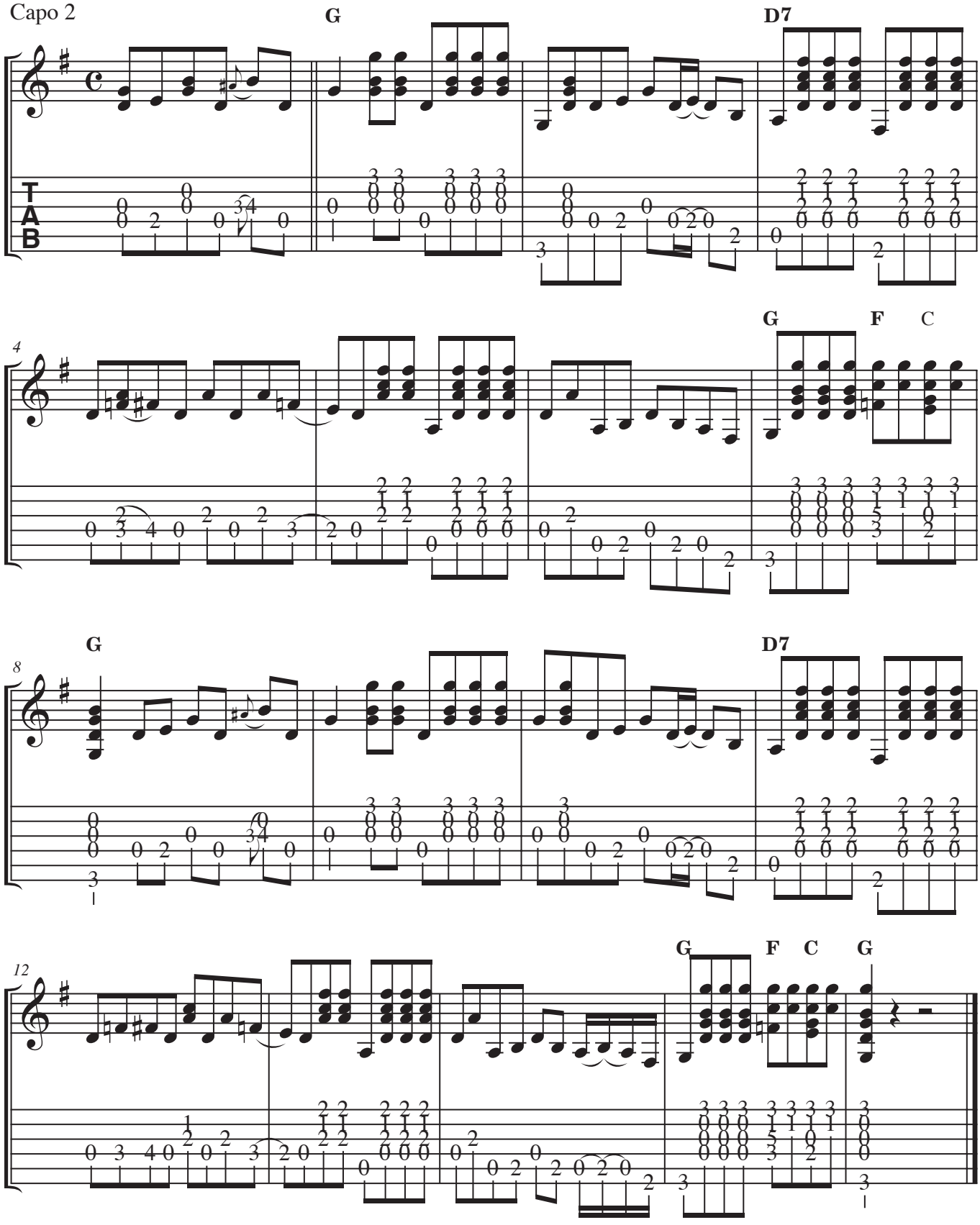
Audio CD
Tracks 5

Carter's Blues

Arranged by Joe Carr



Beginner's Page

by Dan Huckabee

Old Home Place

Old Home Place is an old Dillards classic and a Bluegrass Jam Session standard if there ever was one. It was written by Dean Webb and Mitch Jayne of the Dillards, and it was later recorded by J. D. Crowe and the New South, featuring Tony Rice, Ricky Scaggs, and Jerry Douglas.

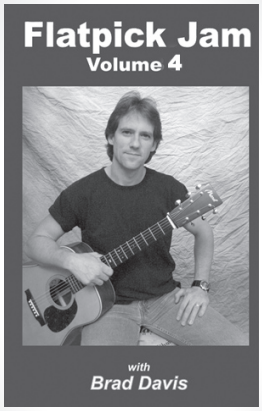
The Dillards recorded it in the key of A and the New South recorded it in Bb. I have chosen to record this lesson in Bb, which means I played in G-position with my capo on the 3rd fret. If you wanted to play it in A, you could simply capo to the 2nd fret and if you wanted to play it in G, you could simply take your capo off.

Be forewarned that there is one chord that is outside the usual G, C, D or Tonic, Subdominant, Dominant chord structure. That chord is B7. When you have a B7 in the key of G, you have what I call a "Ragtime Chord." Some refer to it as a chord from the "Circle of 5ths," and still others refer to it as an "Accidental." Whatever you choose to call it, you still have to address it when you are developing your solo, because it effects the harmonic structure. The way I addressed it when I was working up this solo, was by simply following the melody and making sure that the notes that I played during the one measure of B7, we're appropriate to both the melody and to the B7 chord.

I hope you will find my interpretation of this song to be inspiring and that it will allow you to contribute more at Jam Sessions.

If you have any questions, give me a call toll free at Musician's Workshop, 800-543-6125.

WIth Brad Davis' Flatpick Jam



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Flatpicking Guitar Magazine
Audio mp3 Archive

Volume 3, Number 6 to Volume 13, Number 1
(September 1999 to October 2008)

Audio CD
Tracks 7-8

Old Home Place

Arranged by Dan Huckabee

Kaufman's Corner

by Steve Kaufman

Banks of the Ohio

Hi friends, and welcome back to my corner of the magazine. As I mentioned on the CD, I was noodling around crossing E chord shapes and this tune popped out so I thought I would share it with you.

The first thing I want you to do is go over your crosspicking rolls to make sure they are smooth and performed as a motor skill. Look at measure 1. All eighth notes right? That means DUDUDUDU with your right-hand pick direction. Get this smooth and rock solid. Spend a few days on just this roll if you've never done it. Life will be so much easier because of it.

The next thing to do is run through the chord shapes in the charts provided (page 23) using the fingerings that are marked. When you are comfortable changing these chord shapes in the sequence on the page and you are comfortable with the crosspicking rolls, you are ready to go.

There's not too much more coaching I can give you on this piece. It should flow well for you and give you a very handsome break to "Banks of the Ohio." Use the fingerings that are marked for the chord. You will also see them in the music as the numbers between the notes and the tab.

Remember that all eighth notes alternate DUDU and all quarter notes are hit with a down swing.

Have fun with this solo and see how you can apply these same chord shapes and rolls to other songs. When you can do that, you will own the rolls and patterns.

Cheers and bye for now.
Steve Kaufman

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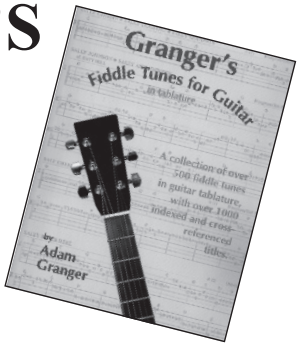

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Audio CD
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Banks of the Ohio

Arranged by Steve Kaufman

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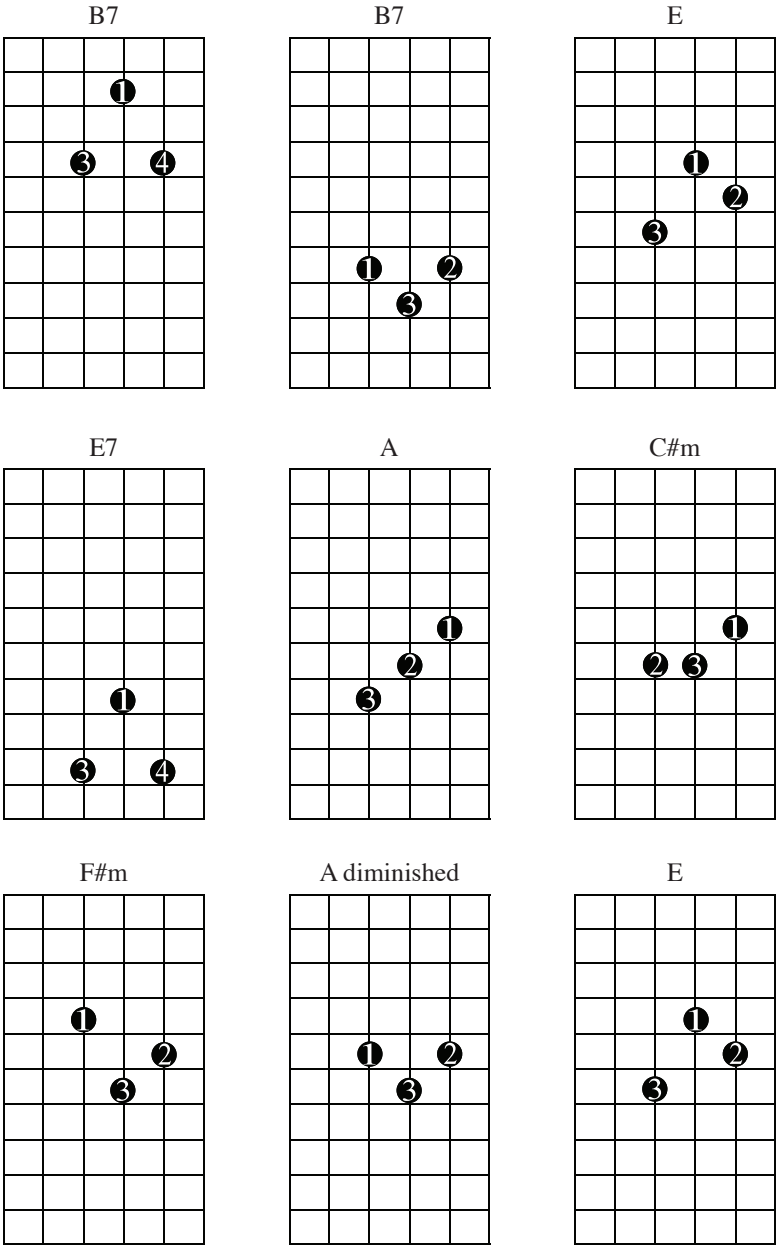
Chords in Order of Appearance



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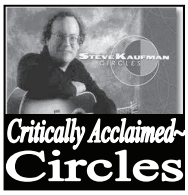

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Taking It To The Next Level: Find That "Do"

by John Carlini

Ear training is the most important part of being a musician. Every time you learn something new (a new chord, a new lick, etc.), your ear internalizes that sound. The more you use the new chord voicing, the more you can access it without "thinking" about it. Knowing how that sound relates to the "do" of the tune is crucial to the music. You know that when you are in the key of G and you play a D chord that it is the V chord, etc. It does not need to be an intellectual process. It's instinctively based on the sound.

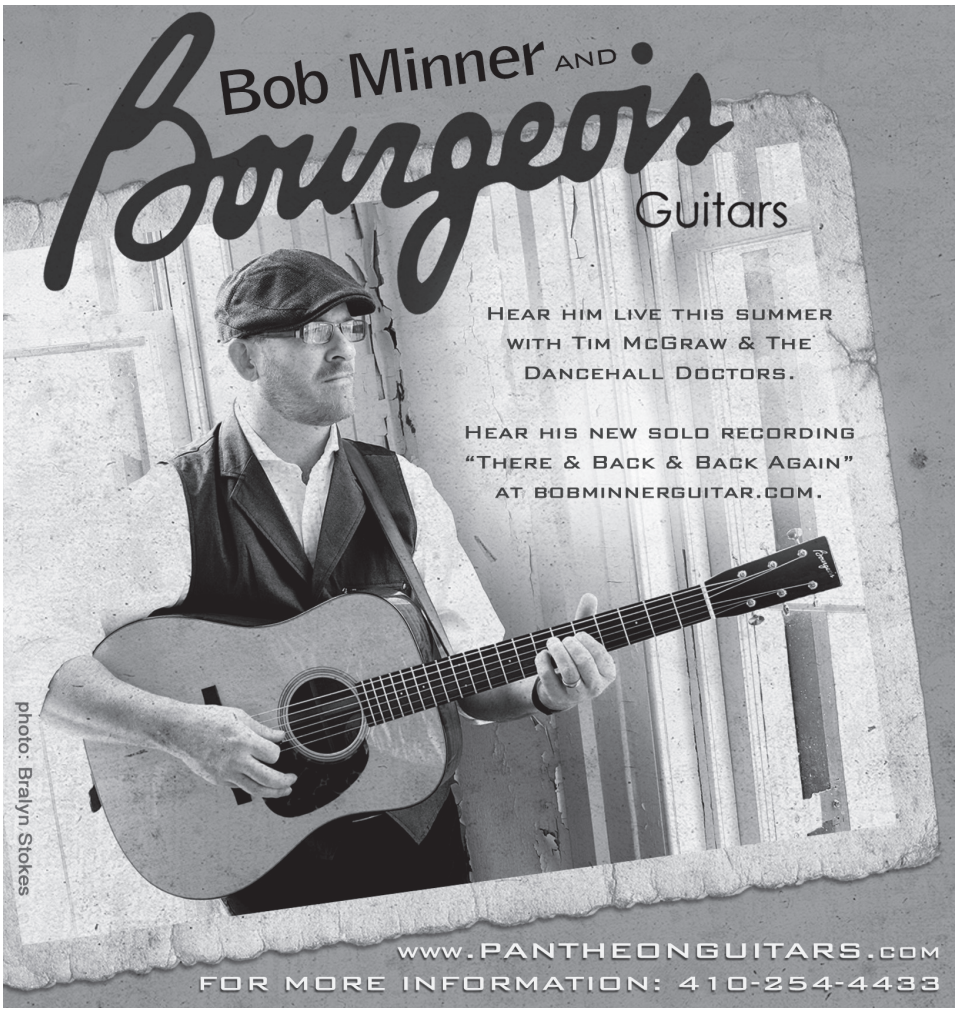
The exercise on the audio portion of this column is designed to train your ear to identify "Do" as it relates to other pitches.

You don't even need a guitar to do this exercise. You can practice it while you are painting a wall or working in a garden! You can use whatever pitch you can internalize. I have used a G as a guide pitch, but it doesn't matter what pitch you use. The important thing is to identify and internalize the intervallic relationship between that pitch and "Do".

The game here is to imagine that pitch as "Re" and then find "Do", make it "Mi", then find "Do", make it "Fa", find "Do", etc. until you find all seven "Do's" as they relate to that common pitch.

At first you can use your guitar to help solve each "Do". Eventually it should be just your voice. No guitar! This is a very valuable exercise. At first it is not easy, but you will find it to be challenging and rewarding as you develop more ear recognition ability.

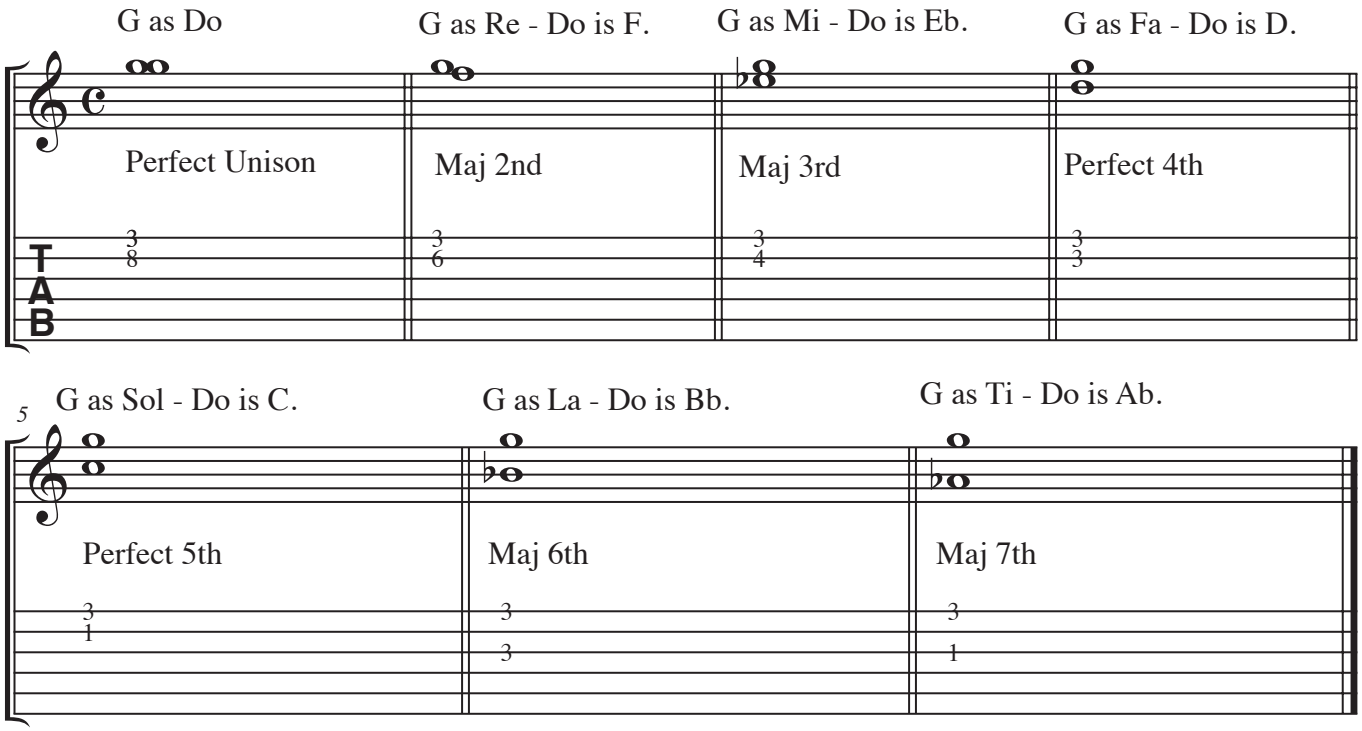
Now find that Do!



Audio CD
Track 11

Find That "Do" Exercise

Arranged by John Carlini



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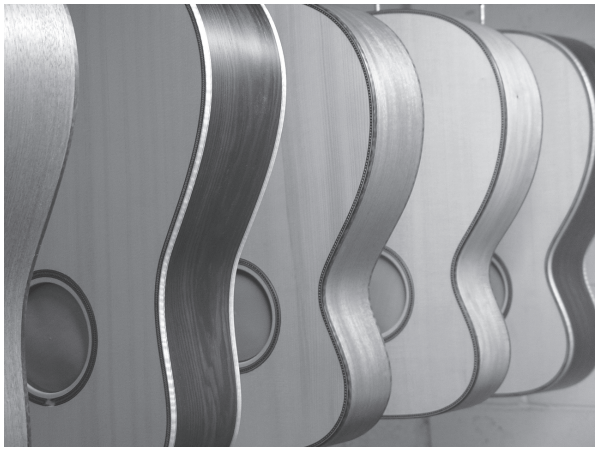
CHRIS STUART - Songwriting

~Sleep a Little~Fingerpick~Write~Jam~Swim~Connect~

East Virginia Guitars

by Dan Miller



What do a guy who specializes in classic car restoration and a leather worker who is a master at crafting authentic historic leather mugs, bottles, and buckets have in common? Well, if the car restoration expert is a guy named George Simmons and the leather craftsman's name is Bill Ruppert, it turns out that they have quite a bit in common. In addition to being talented at their respective crafts, and both living in eastern Virginia, George and Bill share a love for fine acoustic guitars and they are both former employees of Merrill and Company. They have also recently teamed up to build guitars together under the name East Virginia Guitars, Inc. (EVG).

Both George and Bill grew up building things. George loved to tinker with cars and was just sixteen when he started doing paintwork on car bodies. Bill's family owned a hardware store that contained some blacksmithing tools that Bill "started fooling around with" when he was about 12 years old. A few years later, Bill had the opportunity to learn the blacksmithing trade from Randy McDaniel of Silver Run, Maryland, and eventually worked as a resident blacksmith at the Carroll County Farm Museum for three years. That job, and college in the Shenandoah Valley, led to a move to Williamsburg, Virginia, and a job in the museum trade at Jamestown Settlement working as an exhibit carpenter. Although he continued blacksmithing, Bill also became interested in leatherwork. He was befriended by Eric Myall, a saddler in Williamsburg; and started doing some work with him on the side in 1985.

By 1989 Bill Ruppert left the museum job and became a full time leatherworker. Much of the work that Bill has done, and continues to do, is for Colonial Williamsburg making replica leather buckets, mugs, and bottles. Historians and historic reenactment buffs hold his work in such high regard that when Hollywood needs authentic props for their period movies, Bill is the guy that they call. His leather mugs, bottles, and/or buckets can be seen in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies (starring Johnny Depp), the *Master and Commander* movie (starring Russell Crowe), *The Patriot* movie (starring Mel Gibson), the *Muppets Treasure Island* movie, and the HBO *John Adams* miniseries (starring Paul Giamatti and produced by Tom Hanks).

Bill has always had a love for guitars. He built his first guitar when he was fourteen. It is an electric guitar, made of red cedar and spruce, that he still owns. In 1999 Bill toured the Santa Cruz Guitar Company's shop and then ordered a 12-fret Koa 000 with an Adirondack spruce top from Steve Swan. After he owned that guitar for about six months the center seam on the top started to open up and so he took the guitar to local guitar builder and repairman Jim Merrill. Eventually that meeting led to a job working at Merrill's shop.

Bill began working at the Merrill guitar shop in 2002. At first he was working on the guitar bodies and scraping binding. In the two and a half years that Bill worked at the Merrill shop he eventually was also carving top bracing, carving necks, and shooting the finish and working on final setup. Just before Bill left Merrill in 2005, George Simmons had been hired to work there.

After serving in the United States Air Force for twenty years (1972 to 1992) George Simmons retired and opened up a car restoration business. George's car restoration shop, where he specializes in bodywork and upholstery, was located, coincidentally, about 150 yards from Merrill's guitar shop. About a year before starting to work at Merrill, George's wife had given him a Martin kit guitar and he was very interested in learning more about guitar building.

George discovered that Merrill was hiring and went over for an interview and got the job. At first George did fretwork and rough wood processing. Eventually, he learned all of the jobs in the shop. Although the number of employees at Merrill and Company has varied over the years, George said that during one summer it was only he and Jim working there, so he was very much involved in all of the aspects of guitar building. George worked at the Jim's shop until April of 2010. During that time he not only worked on most of the Merrill guitars that were built, but he also built three guitars and two ukuleles of his own on the side.

While he was honing his guitar building skills, George had continued to run his car restoration business. He works on street rods, custom cars, and antique vehicles. His specialty has always been bodywork, painting, and upholstery. After George left Merrill, he continued to restore cars, but also started to build guitars in his own shop.

During the short time that Bill and George had been working together, their wives had become friends and they stayed in touch. It was their wives who suggested that the two of them get together and build guitars on their own. George said, "I had been collecting luthiery tools over the years and I had an extra bay in the garage where I had my car restoration business." In 2008 they had converted that space to accommodate guitar building and by 2009 the first East Virginia guitar had been built. George said, "We finished the first instruments in May of 2009."

By the time I conducted the interview with George and Bill, in early March of 2011, East Virginia Guitar number 23 was sitting on the workbench. To date they have built three different guitar models. They have a Dreadnought (their FP model) an OM body size (their FS model) and a deep body single 0 model that they call their DB0.

When asked what kind of woods they like to use for the back and sides, George said, "We have used Indian, Amazon, and Bubinga rosewoods and we've used African, Honduran and Cuban mahogany." Adirondack spruce is used exclusively for the top wood and bracing. They are using a maple bridge plate and ebony fingerboard,

bridge, and bridge pins. For the mahogany instruments, the binding, end wedge, and heel cap is made of snake wood and they like to put a half herringbone trim on the top. The rosewood guitars are bound in curly maple, with full herringbone purfling. They use a traditional dovetail neck joint to join the neck and body and to reinforce the sides they use the cloth strips in the Martin tradition. George said, "Our Dreadnought guitars are a 1930's Martin replica with a different aesthetics package."

The bracing pattern used on the East Virginia Guitars copies the Martin design from the 1930s. For the nut and saddle they use pre-ban elephant ivory. The bridge pins are ebony with a mother-of-pearl dot on top. The tuners are the Grover open back butter bean style with an 18:1 ratio, and their standard nut width is 1 and 3/4 inches with a bridge spacing of 2 and 5/16 inches. When building the top, George and Bill will thickness the Dreadnought tops to about 115 thousandths and bring the top thickness down on the OM and DB0 models to about 105 thousandths. Then they "hand-flex" the top to determine it's relative stiffness. From there they will vary the scalloping of the top braces based on the stiffness of the top wood.

George and Bill will hold off on the final stages of the brace scalloping process until the entire box is built. Once the body has been put together they will "tap the box" and then go in to make final scalloping adjustments to the braces. To finish the guitar they spray 22 coats of Nitro-cellulose lacquer. They first spray 11 coats and then flat sand to reveal grain filling needs. Then they spray the final 11 coats, wait ten days to two weeks and then execute the final sand and buff. On the neck they will only spray 10 coats of lacquer and add a flattener to the final coat so that neck has more of a matte finish.

I first met with Bill and George in November of 2010 when they brought a couple of guitars for me to inspect and play. I was very impressed with what I saw. The guitars looked, played, sounded, and felt as good as any new guitars that I have seen on the market. In late December I met with Bill once again and he loaned me the mahogany model Dreadnought so that I would have more time to play the guitar. The feel and the sound of the guitar is very much like the best Merrill guitars that I have played and owned.

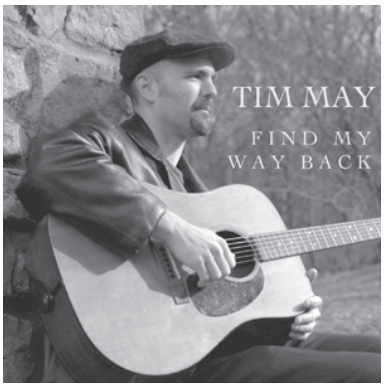
In early March of 2011 I set up a booth at the Cabin Fever Pickin' Party in Hampton, Virginia, and the East Virginia Guitars, Inc. booth was right next to ours. At that event I had the opportunity to play a few more of the East Virginia Guitars and I especially fell in love with a guitar that they had built out of Cuban mahogany. It was a very fine guitar.

George Simmons (left) and Bill Ruppert (right) of the East Virginia Guitar Company

Someone else who fell in love with the EVG guitars at the Hampton, Virginia, event was Maria Fitzmaurice. Maria is the singer, songwriter, and guitar player in the up-and-coming progressive bluegrass band Fitzmaurice. The band has recently signed with Infidel Records and is on the fast track to becoming one of the most popular acoustic bands in the country. The band has opened shows for The Infamous Stringdusters, The Dixie Bee-Liners and Mountain Heart, as well as major country recording artists Jason Michael Carroll and Josh Gracin. Josh Williams said, "Fitzmaurice is one of the best new bands in the business! Stellar vocals combined with superb musicianship and incredible material makes Fitzmaurice a new force to be reckoned with. I'm very proud to call them my friends." Currently two of the Fitzmaurice band members, Maria Fitzmaurice and Brandon Snellings, are playing East Virginia Guitars, Inc. instruments.

If you are in the market for a new guitar, there are a lot of fine choices out there. However, if you want a custom built guitar in many cases you have to wait for a long time and have to pay premium prices. Many times, new builders are the way to go because you can get a very fine guitar built to your exact specifications without waiting so long and, in many cases, you don't have to pay quite as much. So, I highly recommend that you give the folks at East Virginia Guitars a call and check out what they have to offer. (www.eastvirginiaguitars.com)

Tim May



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Sharpening the Axe
by Jeff Troxel

Sheebeg and Sheemore

In the last column we began exploring the concept of chord melody by harmonizing a simple fiddle tune. In this issue I'll take that concept and expand it into more of a full-blown arrangement. I selected a beautiful melody by the Irish composer Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738). "Sheebeg and Sheemore" was one of his first compositions, and is certainly one of his most famous. The melody will be familiar to most of you, and those of you who don't know it are in for a treat.

This arrangement can be played with just a pick or with pick and fingers if you prefer. Because many of the timbral effects of the arrangement rely on where the notes are played, you should pay close attention to the tablature line. Let open notes ring out whenever possible to help smooth the transitions of the left hand to new positions (as in measure one).

In measure 3 there's a grace-note that should be hammered quickly from the first finger to the fourth. All other grace notes in the piece should also be played with quick hammer-ons.

If you're playing the piece using only the pick, deaden the 5th string with the pad of the second finger in measure 3 so it doesn't sound when you strum across the chord. This technique of strumming across dead strings will also be used in measures 5, 17 and 19.

Be sure to use rest-strokes to bring out the sound of the melody notes when they sound on top of chords. Otherwise you'll obscure the melody and give the piece an imprecise sound. This is especially important where the melody occurs on lower strings, such as in measures 4, 11, 12, 25 26 and 28.

This arrangement might be a challenge if you're not used to playing up the neck. But I believe that mastering it will help you get to new levels of understanding about arranging and playing up the neck. Feel free to change certain passages to suit your own needs or preferences. After all, this is Troxel, not Bach. Do what you can to make it your own.

I recommend listening to the audio CD that accompanies this issue to get a sense of how it should sound before trying to learn it. Good luck with this piece, and feel free to email me with questions. I'll catch you next time.

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Audio CD
Track 27

Sheebeg and Sheemore

Arranged by Jeff Troxel

Store Visit:

Morgan Music

by Dan Miller

Morgan Music, in Lebanon, Missouri, has been through a lot in the last few years. As co-owner Mike Morgan told *The Music Trades* just before the store's grand re-opening in the fall of 2010, "The store burned down, we got burglarized, and I had a liver transplant. But otherwise it's been pretty dull."

Mike Morgan opened his store in 1978 in Lebanon and quickly built a reputation for his business as a place where an acoustic picker could go to find a good deal on new Martin guitar or Stelling banjo. The store, known to many as the "Great American Acoustic Shop," was just about to celebrate its 30th anniversary when, on September 4th, 2008, a drunk driver, who was being pursued by police, plowed into the store traveling at a speed of 94 miles per hour. The van exploded on impact, killing the driver, and the store caught on fire and burnt to the ground.

After the fire did its damage the building was declared a total loss. Morgan, feeling a responsibility to keep providing a paycheck to his staff, moved to re-open as soon as possible. By the next day he and his staff were looking for a temporary location to rent so that they could quickly be back up and running. Three days later Morgan had signed a lease on a temporary space. With help from the community and cooperative and understanding suppliers, the store was back in business in about nine days. The staff maintained a sense of humor through the ordeal. Updating customers on the web just after the fire, one store staff member wrote, "Stop by Morgan Music, the hottest store in the Midwest. We've got smokin' deals!"

As if having their store burn to the ground was not tragedy enough, about a week after they had opened at the temporary location, just before a security company completed the installation of an alarm system, the store was burglarized and about $30,000 worth of merchandise was stolen. Among other things, the thieves stole a Gibson Bill Monroe model mandolin and a Bourgeois IBMA guitar. Both of those instruments were limited editions. The good news is that the thieves were eventually caught.

While Morgan Music operated out of its temporary location, a new building was being constructed on the old building's site. Morgan had kept meticulous inventory records and was able to hand the insurance company a thumb drive that accounted for every item that was in the store. With the insurance money that was awarded for the old store disaster, Morgan saw an opportunity to make a bigger and better Morgan Music. An engineer and architect where hired to design a new 13,000 square foot facility on the site of the old 6600 square foot building. Morgan told *The Music Trades* "Our old store was a generic building that could have suited a lot of retail business. This new one was designed, from the ground up, to be a music store."

The new store opened in September of 2010 and in October of 2010 they celebrated with a grand opening event. Tim May and I had the opportunity to be a part of that event by teaching a flatpicking guitar workshop at the store that day. Our workshop was followed by an evening concert featuring flatpicking guitar players Bull Harman, Bob Minner, and Dale Martin. You've just got to love a store that features a full day of flatpicking guitar events at their grand re-opening!

Store manager Alvin Deskins is the man who deserves a lot of credit for the work that was done to transition the store from tragedy through the grand re-opening, especially since Mike Morgan had to undergo chemotherapy and radiation treatments, followed by a liver transplant in April of 2010. Alvin has been working at Morgan Music for about ten years. Prior to managing the store he was a local banjo/guitar/mandolin player who had an engineering background and up until 1990 he had been working in the world of tooling and automation. Alvin, who had always been a patron of Morgan Music, said, "Mike was growing and needed some help. He kept after me until I accepted his offer to come work with him."

Since Alvin started working as the manager the store's business has more than doubled. When Alvin came to the store Morgan was carrying just a few high end instruments, such as Martin guitars and Gibson banjos. One of the additions that Alvin made was the inclusion of more boutique high-end instruments. The store starting carrying instruments like Bourgeois and Collings guitars and Huber, Yates, and Hopkins banjos.

Even though Alvin did start to bring in some boutique instruments, he stated that he did not want to bring in instruments from too many different builders. He said,

"I want to represent each product line well. That means that instead of having one or two instruments from a large variety of builders, we will have six or eight guitars that represent a small number of high end builders. At any given time we will have six or eight new Bourgeois and six or eight new Collings guitars in stock along with about thirty-five new Martin guitars."

In addition to the new guitars, Morgan Music also carries a wide variety of high end used instruments. Alvin said, "We give our customers a fair value for there used instruments, so we usually have a good selection." At any given time a customer walking into Morgan's acoustic room may find used guitars from Rockbridge, Huss & Dalton, Santa Cruz, Martin, Collings, Bourgeois, or any number of other builders. When I was at the store the acoustic room was full of a lot of very fine high end guitars and it was a pleasure to take some time and explore what they had to offer.

In addition to a room full of fine acoustic instruments, Morgan Music also features electric guitars by Fender, Gibson, Paul Reed Smith, and others, as well as amps, public address systems, microphones, keyboards, and drums. In fact, the store has an audio/visual installation team that provides full installation of a range of audio and visual equipment to local schools, churches, and theaters. Morgan Music also has staff of instructors who teach lessons on a variety of instruments. In the near future Alvin hopes to expand the lesson curriculum to include a series of master classes on topics like Monroe style mandolin or Tony Rice style guitar.

When I visited Morgan Music my impression of the new facility was that it was one of the finest and most complete music stores that I had ever seen. The new building was designed with the musician in mind and it really shows. In addition to having a wonderful new facility, Morgan Music brings forward the qualities that it has been known for during the past 33 years, which includes a thorough knowledge of their product, fantastic service, and very reasonable prices.

If you ever find yourself near Lebanon, Missouri, I highly recommend that you check out Morgan Music. Alvin said, "Many of our customers drive for hours to get here. For them this is a destination." I would have to agree. Any place in this country that would house a room full of fine acoustic instruments is an awesome destination.

To find out more about Morgan Music, visit: www.morganmusic.com.

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"Sally Goodin'"
by Kathy Barwick

Today I'm continuing some ideas from my last column ("You've Been a Friend to Me") which discussed using a strummy pattern on two strings and playing out of chords. This time we'll use "Sally Goodin" to demonstrate a left-hand approach that I've been finding increasingly valuable. So, let's get started.

First, note that this venerable fiddle tune is in the key of A. I'm going to play it in G by putting a capo on the second fret. Now I'm ready to go.

Here's the thing I want to show you in this lesson: I'm going to put my middle finger on the 2nd string 3rd fret and leave it there for much of the tune. That D note on the 2nd string mostly acts as a drone. Now this is a very valuable concept. If you leave the G string open, you have a nice double-stop, two of the three notes (G and D) in a G chord. If you fret the G string at the 2nd fret with your index finger, you have part of a D chord (or, it could be used while still in G as a melody note between chord tones). And if you fret the G string at the 4th fret (use your ring finger) you also have two notes of a G chord: the G and B notes (see Figure 1). (Now of course in G we could use the open B string as a drone as well, but using the D note is cool for getting the D chord... plus it just sounds better than a B note ringing through.)

Some notes on the arrangement:

1. Measures 1 and 2 are introductory ("potatoes," as they call them.... I don't know why). The last beat of M2 are pick-up notes.
2. Start with your middle finger on the 2nd string 3rd fret. Don't pick it up until M6, though you could leave it down then as well.
3. In M7 I didn't play the second string in the first half of the measure, but it was fretted at the 3rd fret anyway. I meant to play it but it didn't happen. So, if you hit it, that's just fine.
4. At the start of the B part (M11) I've let go of that second string D note. I'm going to play largely out part of an "F shape" G chord (Figure 2). Start the slide with your middle finger. Then use the index for the second string D note. The ring finger plays the 5th fret note, both on the B and G strings.
5. There's a special treat in M17, a salute to Clarence White (if you have the Barenberg Clarence White book, you can see the real thing on p. 33). Play that first "chord" with a swift arpeggio, articulating each note more than you would if you were strumming. It's slower than a strum but faster than individually-picked notes; aim to get to the last note (on the E string) on the one count.

So what's so good about this? By holding down the D note on the B string--especially when playing in a G chord and a D chord--you can really create a foundation for playing Carter style or crosspicking. It's useful in many keys, particularly G, Em and D. I'll explore the usefulness of this little idea in future columns. "Sally Goodin" provides a nice simple arrangement to get used to the idea of keeping that note fretted. Once you get used to it, you'll find it both easy and very useful.

Kathy Barwick has played guitar since the late 1960s, when she learned folk-style fingerpicking. Kathy also plays banjo resophonic guitar and acoustic bass, and has performed over the years with various bluegrass bands. A founding member of The All Girl Boys, Kathy now plays resophonic guitar with Mountain Laurel, a bluegrass band based in the Grass Valley area of northern California. Kathy is the guitarist in the Irish band Nine-8ths Irish (www.nine8thsirish.com).

A Sacramento resident, Kathy teaches at music camps and gives private lessons on guitar, resophonic guitar, banjo, and bass. She welcomes your feedback and/or comments; you can contact her at kbarguitar@yahoo.com or visit on the web at www.kathybarwick.net.

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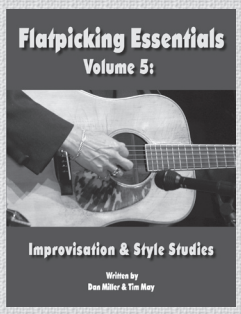

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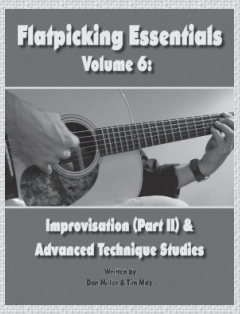

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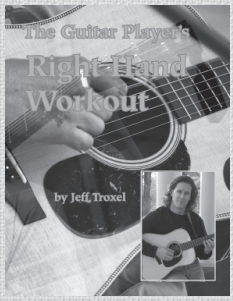
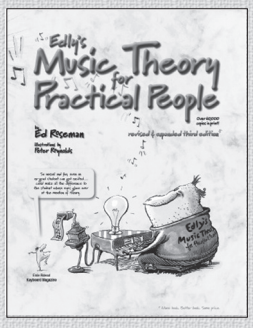


Right Hand Workout



Music Theory

Audio CD
Tracks 12 - 14

Sally Goodin'

Arranged by Kathy Barwick

Figure 1:

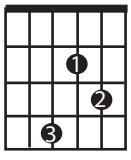
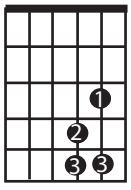


Figure 2:



THE O-ZONE

by Orrin Star

Eight More Miles to Louisville

This is a great old Grandpa Jones tune that everyone knows but which I don't hear played all that frequently. (Sam Bush is probably as responsible as anyone for keeping it in mind in recent years; he has often opened his shows with it.) And because the melody lends itself rather effortlessly to eighth-note elaborations, it is ready-made for flatpicking.

While lots of folks play this in G (as did Dan Huckabee in a 2007 column in these pages), I like how it scans in C. As with many of my arrangements this one features a healthy dose of double-stops, strums, and some overall Blake mojo. Because key melodic phrases in the tune repeat several times, the challenge here was to avoid rote repetition by injecting subtle variations throughout.

A few subtleties that bear noting:

Measure 18: you've just moved your middle finger from its usual place in the C chord over one string to the second fret of the G string—and you hold it there for those first strums.

Measure 19: this is not a simple open-D-string-to-C-note move but a transition to a full F-chord (that is, with your ring finger on the C, your pinky on the F, etc.).

Measure 30: I intentionally leave the high E open when I'm strumming that F chord in order to get a different sound.

Enjoy.

PS: There's a very nice version of this tune by Ohio picker Adam Schlenker in the video area of flatpick.ning.com.

Orrin Star (www.orrinstar.com) is an award-winning guitar, banjo & mandolin player based in the Washington, DC area. The 1976 National Flatpicking Champion, he has toured and recorded widely, is the author of Hot Licks for Bluegrass Guitar, and performs mostly solo and duo. He offers private music instruction both in person and online.

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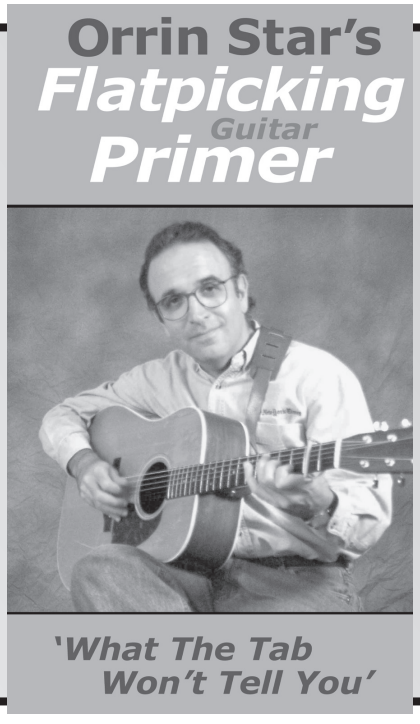

Audio CD
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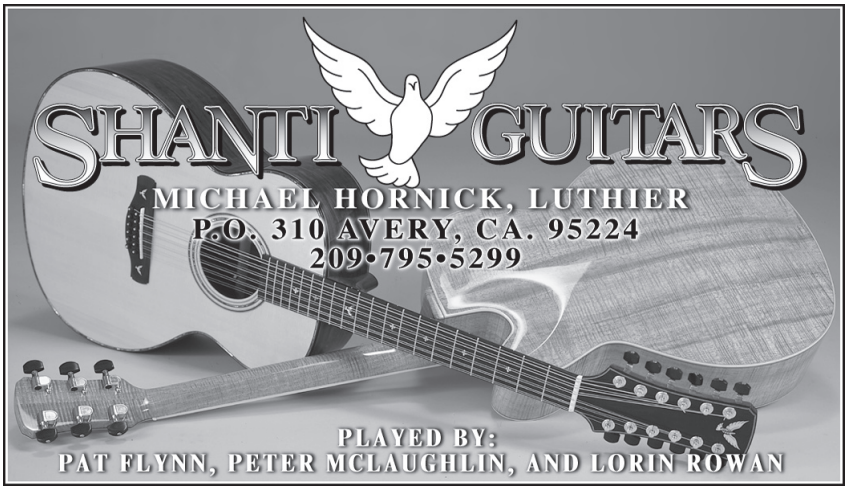
Eight More Miles to Louisville

Arranged by Orrin Star

Eight More Miles to Louisville (con't)



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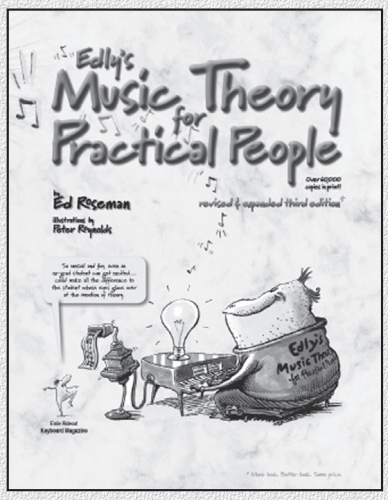

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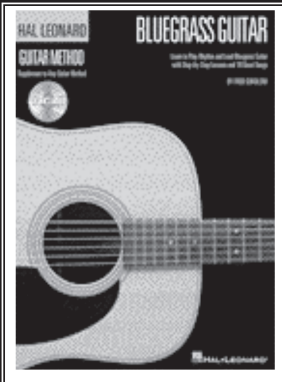

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Ray Price Shuffle Backup

by Dix Bruce

If you're reading *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine* I expect that you're pretty well versed in the typical bass note–strum backup rhythm guitar technique. That technique is the backbone of just about all bluegrass and early country rhythm guitar. As the label reads: "Hold a chord, play a bass note, strum a chord, repeat as necessary." Of course this is just one of many ways to play rhythm guitar to back up vocals or other instruments. Let's look at another.

I'm not sure just what to call this technique but I use it on a particular type of 1950s country song called a "shuffle" (more specifically a "Ray Price Shuffle"). It's a honky tonk hybrid of western, boogie woogie, and country. I don't know that Ray Price invented the style but recordings of his (like "Heartaches by the Number" and "Crazy Arms") are great examples of what I'm talking about. The term "Ray Price Shuffle" is used among musicians in country bands as a quick way to define the feel of a particular song. So, in that light, let's call this guitar technique the "Ray Price Shuffle Backup."

Just like with the bass note–strum technique, we'll combine a bass line — in this case a boogie woogie bass line — with a strum. The music below is written with all eighth notes and looks a little thick and daunting. Be not afraid! With a little work you can add this great technique to your repertoire of rhythm styles.

We count this type of eighth note rhythm as "one-and-two-and-three-and-four-and." We'll play bass notes on beats "one," "two," "three," and "four," and strums on all the "ands" in between the numbers. Play the bass notes with a down pick and all the strums with up picks. It's a constant and efficient down/up pattern. After you play a bass note you'll need to bring your picking hand back up to play the next bass note. As we do that, we just leave the clutch out and play a strum along the way.

Here's an arrangement of Ray Price's great 1956 hit "Crazy Arms" with the "Ray Price Shuffle Backup." To play both the chord and the bass line, we'll fudge a little bit on some of the chord fingerings and we won't play full five- or six-string chord strums. If you can't hold a chord as it's shown, the E for example, where you fret two strings with your second finger, add an additional finger. If you do that you'll have to move in and out of the chord form to facilitate both the chord and the bass line. The good news is that the chord strums are all partials and you'll play only two or three strings — the 4th, 5th, and 6th — on your up-strum.

As you can see from the suggested fretting hand fingerings (shown between the standard notation and the tablature line), your fourth finger is earning its pay on this arrangement. A few of the passages require a bit of a stretch. As mentioned above, on the E chord in measures 1 and 2 and throughout you'll have to hold both strings 4 and 4 at the 2nd fret with your second finger (add a finger if you have to) and reach over to the 4th fret 6th or 5th string for bass notes.

The A chord in measures 3 and 10 is a little easier on the fingers. It's still a bit of a stretch, this time for your third finger, but it is doable with a little practice. Make the A chord with a first finger barre on strings 2, 3, and 4. It won't matter if you mute the 1st string since it's not part of either the bass line or the strum.

On the B7 in measure 6 we'll repeat the B bass note (5th string, 2nd fret) and also the F# bass note (6th string, 2nd fret). Don't worry about your strums ringing clear in the following measure. I just let them mute out and use more of the percussive sound of the strum than the harmonic content. You'll find the same situation with the B7 in measure 13.

As always, practice the technique very slowly. Concentrate on coordinating your fingers and hands and work toward a clear bass line. Again, don't be too concerned that the strum rings out. A little muting is OK. We're going more for the rhythmic content than the harmonic. Don't speed the arrangement up until you can play it slowly. If you play it more than once, skip the final measure and repeat from the top of the piece.

Since this type of accompaniment is so different from the typical bass note–strum backup technique, it's really be helpful for you to hear how it sounds and the accompanying FGM audio CD is highly recommended. I'll also post a short video example on YouTube if ten of you request it. (I'm trying to gauge whether enough of you would find it useful before I tape and post it. Email your request to me at dix@musixnow.com). If you're reading this far into the future, take a shot and search YouTube for "Crazy Arms Dix Bruce." It just might be there!

No home should be without Dix's latest book/CD sets Gypsy Swing & Hot Club Rhythm Vol. I & II (separate editions for guitar & mandolin), Christmas Favorites for Solo Guitar: Best Loved Traditional Songs for Bluegrass Guitar, and The Parking Lot Picker's Songbook, Guitar Edition with over 215 great bluegrass, old time, and gospel songs, with music, chords, tab, lyrics, and more, with every song demonstrated on the two included CDs. Available at www.musixnow.com. You can email Dix at contact@musixnow.com.

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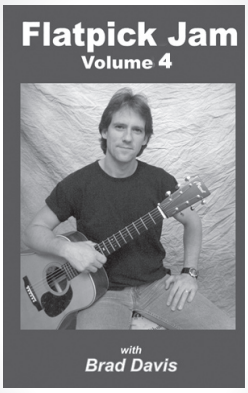

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Country Shuffle Rhythm

Arranged by Dix Bruce

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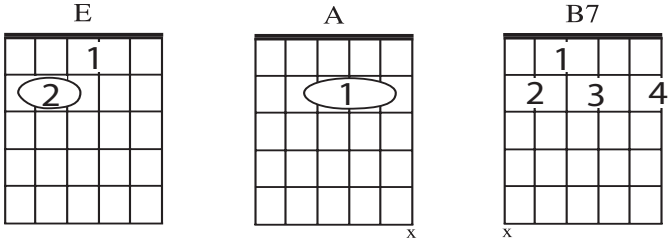

Music Theory:
Mastering the Fingerboard
Technical Studies for Flatpickers

by Michel A. Maddux

Without a Capo

Do you find yourself limited to playing in open keys, or using a capo every time that you wish to play in F, or Bb? I want you to spend some time thinking about playing in F without using a capo.

You recall that the I-IV-V change works for every key. In the key of F, the changes are F, Bb, and C. The F and C chords are pretty easy, as we use them all the time. The Bb can be found in first position as shown in Exercise 1, in four different fingerings, and in 6th position. Notice that the chords use partial fingers for 3- and 4-note chords. Although you may have learned full barre chords (which use all six strings), I rarely play them, as the power and sound desired is available in the 3- and 4-note chords.

Exercise 2 shows the use of the F chord for rhythm, and Exercise 3 the C chord.

Notice that each of these forms can be used with and compliment the sound of the other chords. For example, play the F chord using the top three strings only, then the first position Bb on the top strings, then slide up to the C chord on the top strings. Do the same thing for the bottom string forms. You can play the changes with this type of variety and keep the sound interesting for your audience.

The next exercise shows playing in F in 5th position, followed by C in 5th position. Notice that you can play an entire solo by making up little melodies and licks from these positions, as shown in the next exercise, which plays through the I-IV-V form all from 5th position. I want you to make up your own melodies and ideas using these forms of the chords and exercises as examples of what is possible. Change a note, or the rhythm, and see what you can discover.

About the Tune – Town and Country

"Town and Country" is a tune that I made up with a little bit of a moderate boogie feel. Using the chords and the melody ideas from the exercises you shouldn't have any trouble playing in F. The form is an AABA form, meaning play through the A section twice, then play the B section, also called the bridge, and then repeat the A section.

Have fun, and keep on pickin'!

Mike's guitar music can be heard regularly in the Rocky Mountain West. Contact information on recordings, books, and correspondence can be found at http://www.madduxband.com/ and search Facebook and YouTube for the latest clips and news.

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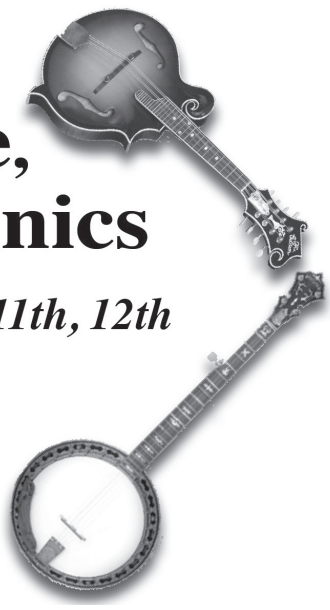

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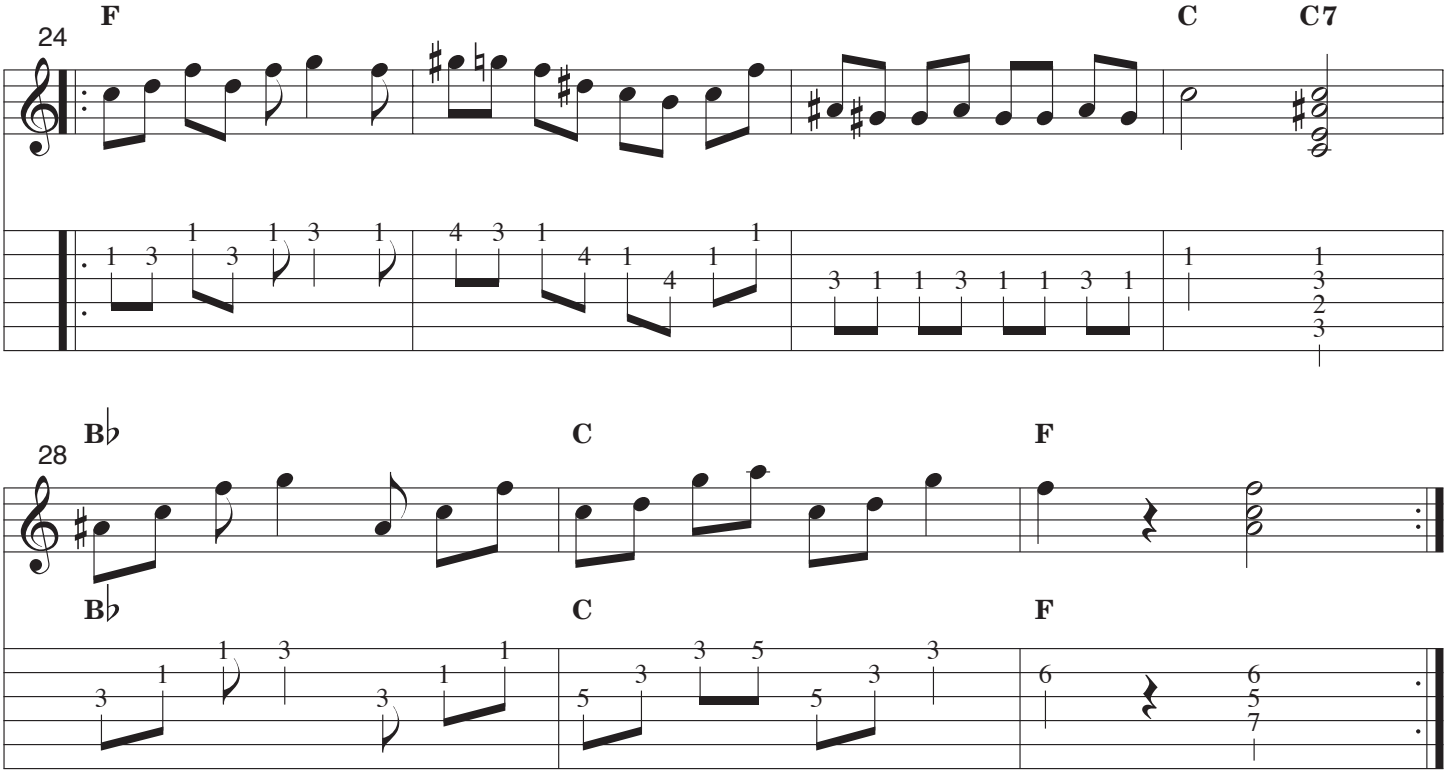
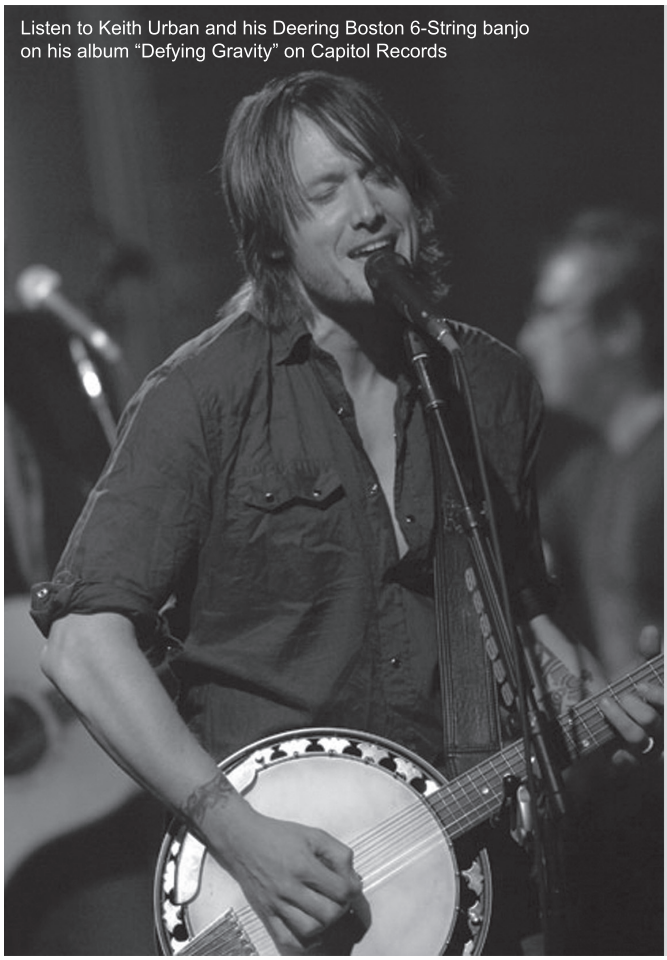
Maddux Exercises

Arranged by Mike Maddux

Maddux Exercises (con't)

I, IV, V Changes in F





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Audio CD
Tracks 23 & 24

Town and Country

Arranged by Mike Maddux

PICKIN' FIDDLE TUNES

by Adam Granger

Horner's Sailpipe

Hi, everyone. A few years back, I released a flatpick album called *Solo Plectrum*. One of the cuts on this album is called *Horner's Sailpipe*; it's a retelling of *Sailor's Hornpipe* in a series of different keys. I start in G, and then switch to a series of fourths of fourths, to wit: G, C, F, Bb and Eb. I thought it would be fun to tab this out for everyone.

Musicologically, this treatment of this tune is not completely insane: *Sailor's Hornpipe* was not originally a fiddle tune, and doesn't, strictly speaking, have a dedicated key: My collection, *Granger's Fiddle Tunes for Guitar*, shows *Sailor's Hornpipe* in G, A, F, C, D and (as the Canadian tune *The College Hornpipe*) Bb. If ever there were a tune which could lay claim to no specific key, it is this one.

This is a great exercise in fingering and key transposition, and, because two of these versions (Bb and Eb) are in closed fingerings (and thus moveable), when you get finished learning all of these versions, you'll be able to play this tune in any key.

Okay, give 'er a whirl, and I'll meet you at the end of the column and we'll talk.

READING *EASY-TAB*

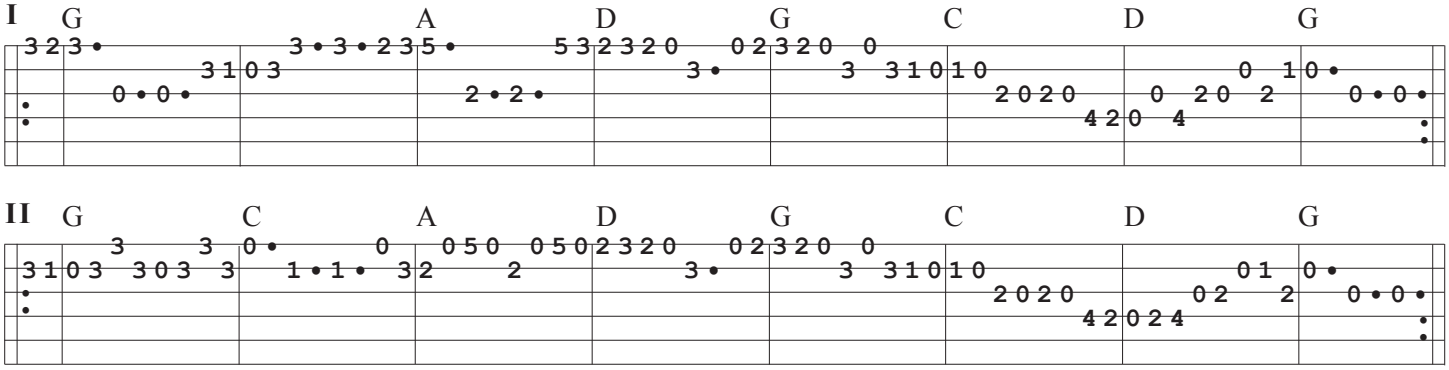
Easytab is like conventional tablature, except that timing notation has been streamlined and simplified. Since fiddle tunes are comprised mainly of eighth notes, *Easytab* uses the eighth note as its basic unit. An eighth rest is indicated by a dot. Therefore, a note with a dot after it is a quarter note, and a note with three dots after it is a half note. There are a total of eight notes and rests per measure.

FOR BEGINNERS

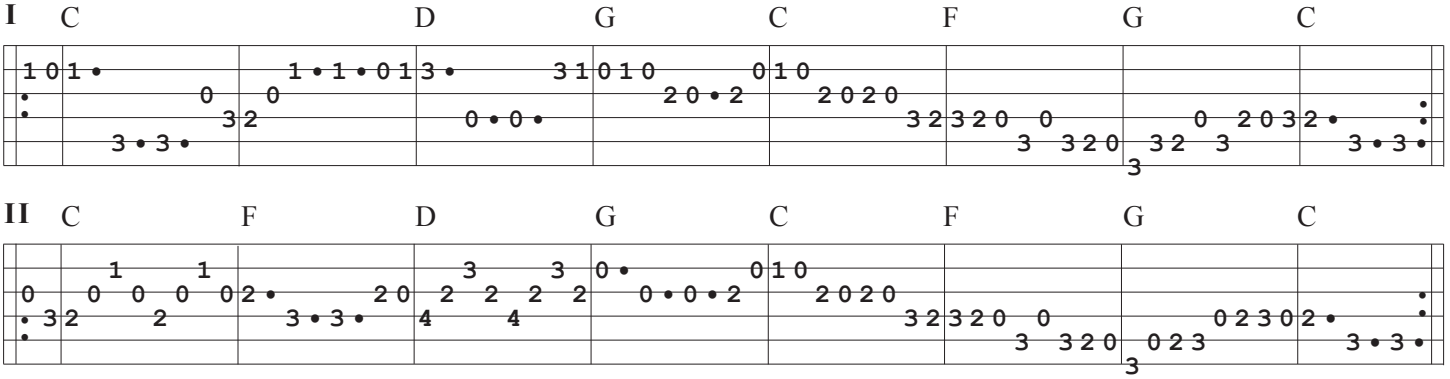
Pick with an alternating style: down-up-down-up-down-up etc. The first note of each measure should be a downstroke, the last an upstroke. **Include rests** in this alternating pattern. This keeps you "in sync", playing downstrokes on the beats, so that, no matter what the configuration of notes and rests in an eight-unit measure, the right hand plays them down-up-down-up-down-up-down-up.

Audio CD
Track 25

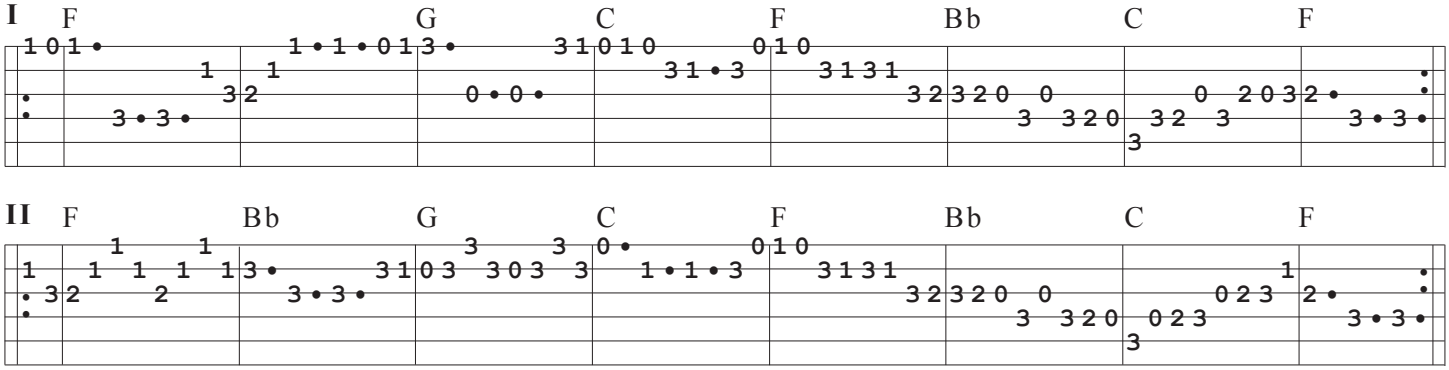
Sailor's Hornpipe in G



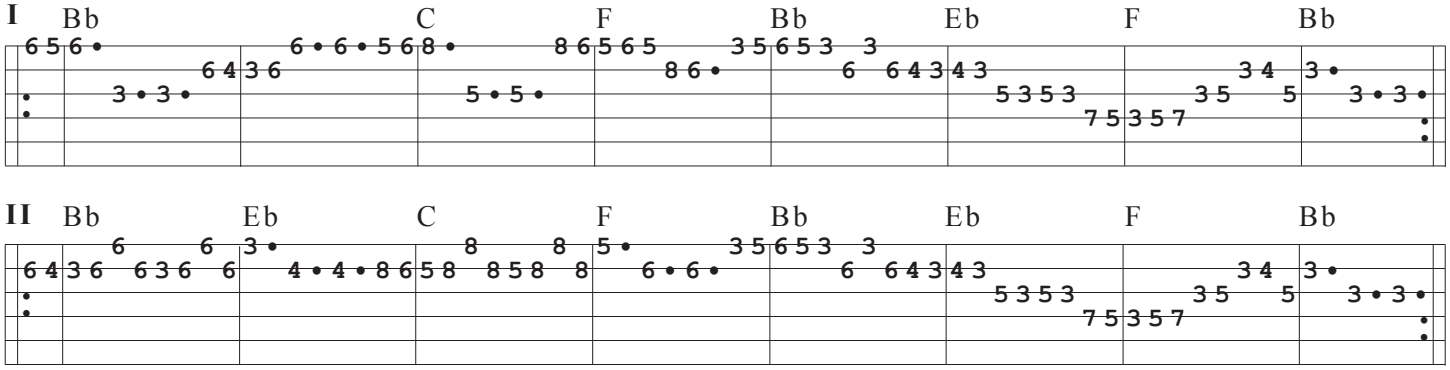
In C



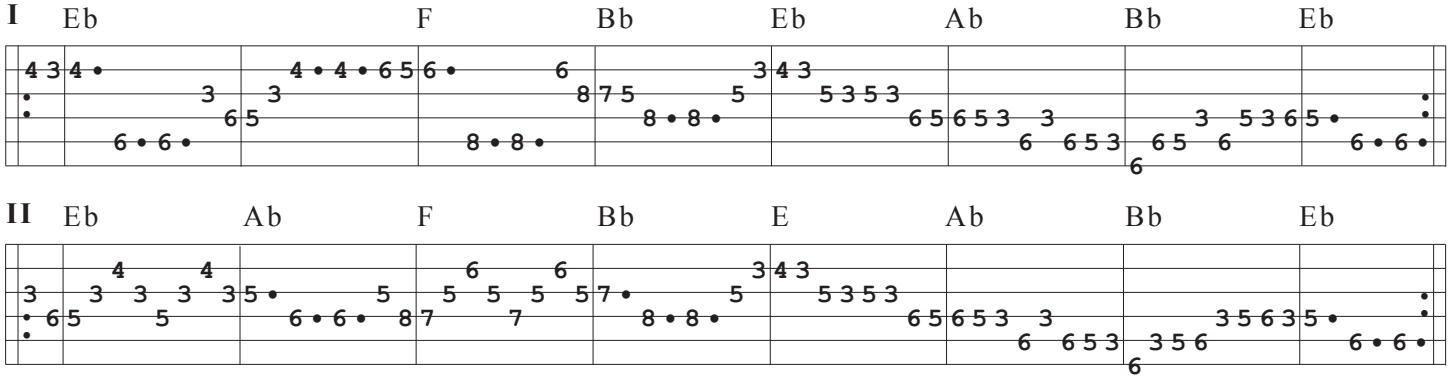
In F



In Bb



In Eb



Well, what'dja think? Pretty fun, eh? Fingering for the closed versions is based on logic, not voodoo: Look at a passage's high and low frets and position your right hand accordingly.

For example, the first two bars of the A part of the Eb version would be played with your hand between the 3rd and 6th frets, and then, during the rest (toward the end of the second measure), you'd move your hand up to cover the 5th through 8th frets.

The most common setting for *Sailor's Hornpipe* is G, but, as I said, you're now set to play this tune anywhere. If you visit American Samoa, and they play this tune on the Greater Pacific Baritone Kalimba in F#, you're good to go: just play your Eb version three frets higher than it's presented here.

Okay, friends, that's it for now. Life is good.

Adam Granger has recently read books about the Panama Canal, missing 1933 gold coins, Custer and Crazy Horse, The Eiffel Tower, the history of Texas, the dust bowl, the attempt on President Truman's life, Castro's rise in Cuba, the goat-gland-implanting Dr Brinkley, border radio, the Hartford circus tent fire, the laying of the transatlantic telegraph cable, Marconi, the Johnstown flood, the 1927 Mississippi River flood, the history of American river commerce, the pony express, the transcontinental railroad, the history of bolshevism, the North Boston harbor molasses flood, the dark tobacco wars, the frozen water trade, two histories of chautauqua tent shows and a whole slew of mafia books.

Bill Bay Presents

Flatpicking Solos

"Distant Homeland"

"Distant Homeland" is a melancholy ballad written in the key of A minor. It was arranged for a seven string guitar, however, the low A notes on the 7th string can be played on the 5th string. The solo should be played with a maximum amount of expression. It should have a flowing feeling to it rhythmically. I hope you enjoy it.

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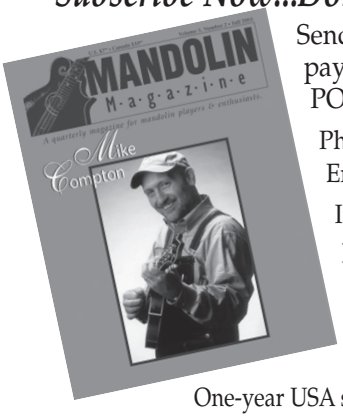

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Distant Homeland

Written by Bill Bay

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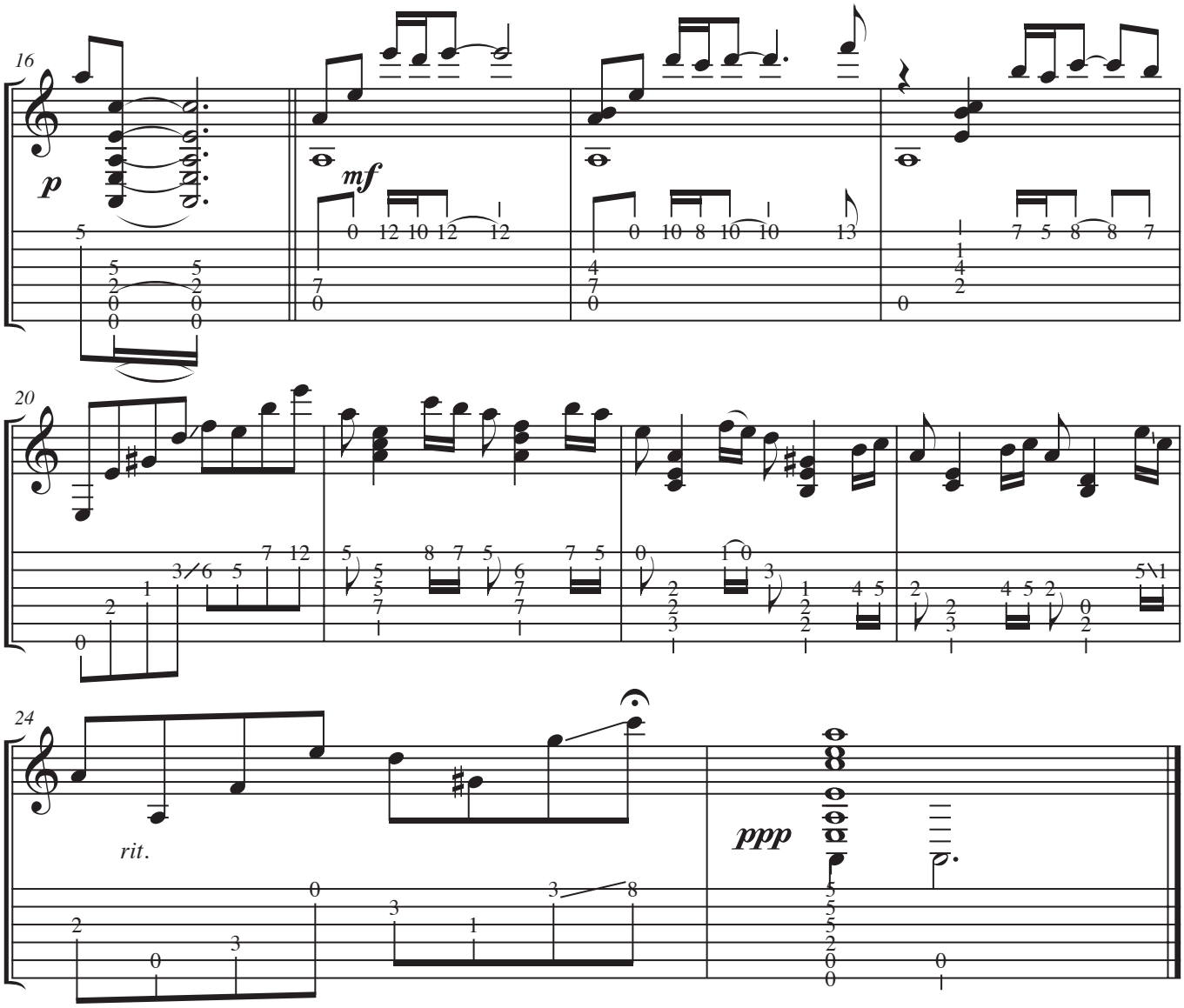

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These tracks are designed to help you practice tunes and improve your speed at your own pace: four different tempos are provided. Playing in time at any speed is essential: the band on these tracks was recorded with a metronome as the "time keeper" so that you can effectively practice in metronomic time without the annoying click in your ear.

John McGann's Eclectic Acoustic

Limehouse Blues: Ending Solo

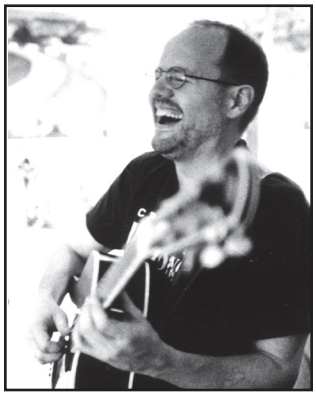
Here is the last part of the solo on "Limehouse Blues," from 1:08. Rather than deconstruct the lines, I'd rather have you listen, play, and then think about why the lines sound the way they do. Here are the main differences between a "straight" bluegrass flatpicking approach and a more jazz/swing oriented solo:

• The bluegrass melody line tends toward a fiddle tune-style of constant eighth notes, without a lot of variation in rhythm, note duration, or dynamics. The jazz style line uses a bit more space (actual rests).

• Bluegrass tends toward sticking to a single scale or combination of pentatonic and major scale notes, with blue notes (b3, b7 and sometimes b5) used for spice. The melodic line is often heavily weighted toward the 1, 3, or 5 of whatever the chord of the moment is. The jazz line tends to use more chromatics ("in-between the scale notes"), and often favors notes "above" the 1-3-5 triad notes, specifically, the 7, 9, 11, 13 and the alterations of these (b9, #9, #11/b5, b13).

I love both styles of playing, and there are times when it's fun to "mix and match" approaches, especially on the crossover tunes played by both jazz and bluegrass musicians: "Farewell Blues," "Bye Bye Blues," "Sweet Georgia Brown," and others that are equally at home at both bluegrass and swing/jazz sessions.

The best way to add these kinds of colors to your playing is by listening to players in the style, and learning the lines by ear. With the advent of slow-down technology available on the computer, almost anyone can access the music, slow it down to whatever speed works for you, and play along. The monumental importance of developing your ear cannot be overstated. Besides, you will never learn to improvise well from tablature alone. Have fun and do let me know if you have any questions or requests!



John McGann (www.johnmcgann.com) is a pofessor at Berklee College of Music. His new duo CD Grove Lane with Irish accordion legend Joe Derrane was voted #1 Irish Traditional Album of 2010 in The Irish Echo. His DVDs Rhythm Tune Up and Rhythm Mandolin and his books Sound Fundamentals and Developing Melodic Variations on Fiddle Tunes are receiving great accolades. You can check out his custom transcription service, in which you can have any music of your choice notated, at the above web address. Drop by the web site for more bio info, and lots of great free technique tips for flatpickers.

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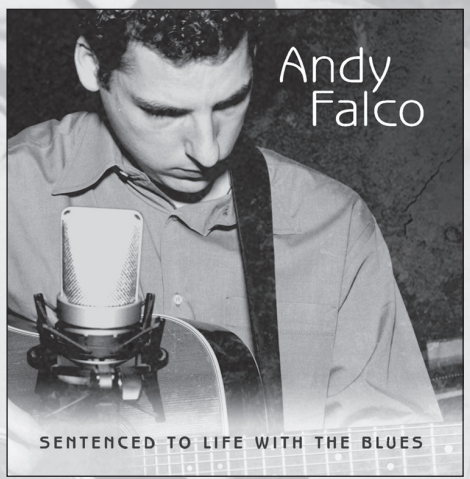

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Limehouse Blues

Arranged by John McGann

A Lesson from Jacquelin du Pre, Flatt & Scruggs, and Don Sullivan

by Dan Crary

Audio CD Track 30

There are lots of reasons for playing the guitar: make money, have a hobby, look cool, get the girl, be like the singer on TV, you name it. Back when I taught guitar lessons at Marina Music in San Francisco (anybody out there remember Marina Music?) I guess I heard all of them, because I always asked. Happily, sometimes when people start to play guitar for shaky reasons, they become seduced by the beauty of the thing, and continue for good reasons.

While I never quibbled with people's motives for taking lessons (none of my business, and after all, I needed the money!), I can tell you there were some patterns. The most reliable predictor of student success in my experience was this: "I heard guitar music, thought it was beautiful, and wanted to have it for myself." It never failed: that student always learned to play.

In her day, the great Jacqueline Du Pre was the ranking cellist of the world, but she died tragically of a progressive disease at the height of her career. *The LA Times* ran an obituary in which her father reported how it was that she took up the cello in the first place. He said that at a very early age (about four, as I recall) she heard the cello played on the radio and said: "I want what makes that noise." And there it is: I have never known people who loved the "noise" of the guitar fail to play it if they tried.

It was my own experience too. When I was 12 I heard a great Kansas City country singer named Don Sullivan on live AM radio on a noon-hour show, singing twangy 50s country songs with just the jangly backup sound of a steel-string guitar. Acoustic guitars were very obscure in those days, and I didn't even know what it was, but it sounded "---------." I don't even have a word for it, but it rocked me, and I never got over it. My dad said it was a guitar, and miraculously, when I asked for one, my folks did the very unlikely thing of buying me a guitar and some lessons. It was one of those moments that changed the course of life, and today the steel-string guitar is still the most incredibly beautiful sound in this world, or any other.

I bring this up because of the many instances where guitar music has had powerful, lasting, unexplainable effects for good in people's lives. In another column we'll trace some of these; for now, let's just agree that what makes the guitar the universal instrument that today moves the whole world, is that quietly beautiful, subtle vibration of steel strings over wood. This is the gift, and in our struggle to play in a way that is impressive, or Tony-er-than-thou, or as good as Bryan Sutton (forget it, you can't), it would be good for your playing to make it an issue of practice, think about making the instrument sound beautiful.

There are some techniques for this, but mostly it's a matter of paying attention and making it a goal. And some of the most beautiful guitar tonality occurs when playing slowly. That's because it takes some care to hold the pick a little tighter, play with a rounded edge of the pick, dig into the string instead of blazing past it in a flurry of fast eighth notes, and in general, pay more attention to the issue of tonality. To judge your progress you need what in manufacturing is called a benchmark: a standard to compare yourself to occasionally, so you can really assess your progress. My suggestion for a great benchmark: Flatt & Scruggs' studio version of "Jimmy Brown, the Newsboy." It's from their first Columbia LP *Foggy Mountain Special*, and it's been re-released on Rounder. I imagine it's on iTunes. It is simply one of the most beautiful tonal sounds ever to come out of a steel-string guitar.

The aesthetic point of guitar music is to hear that unforgettable voice-of-God, cold-wind-from-the-cosmos, eerily heart-stopping sound from the strings when it's just right. 'Been chasing that one for fifty years, got close a few times. But I'm sure of this: if I ever do get there, I'll know it when I hear it.

CD Highlight
Bradley Carter: *The Real Job*

by Dan Miller

Flatpicking guitar music has come a long way since the days when its seeds were first planted by players like Riley Puckett, Roy Harvey, Doc Addington, Maybelle Carter, and George Shuffler, to name a few. Our heroes—Doc Watson, Norman Blake, Clarence White, Tony Rice, and Dan Crary, to name a few—took what those pioneers had done with the acoustic guitar and moved the technique and its application forward by adding complexity and by exploring new musical genres. As time marches on, that trend continues.

Today's flatpickers have taken the contributions of their heroes and mentors and continued to broaden the scope and musical application of flatpicking, taking what they love about traditional flatpicking and mixing it with what they love about other styles of music. Bradley Carter is someone who has done this on a new CD titled *The Real Job*. On this disc Bradley has taken elements of contemporary acoustic rock music (a la Dave Matthews) and mix it with traditional flatpicking technique and alternate tunings and come up with an appealing musical blend.

Bradley's background and his musical journey is a little different than most of the players that we feature in this magazine. Although he did grow up in Nashville and started playing the guitar when he was young, Bradley did not get serious about the guitar until he was in his thirties. In fact, it was because Nashville was his hometown that he shied away from the music in an effort to rebel against what everyone else in that town was doing. Bradley said, "My Dad would noodle on the guitar with a countrified strumming and I learned how to play 'House of the Rising Sun' as a kid. But I didn't learn much beyond that and I didn't practice at all. I also took piano lessons and I played trumpet in the middle school band. But I never practiced those either. I was more into sports."

Bradley admits that the sum total of his knowledge on the guitar when he graduated high school was the ability to strum a few power chords and play a couple of riffs. He said, "I was never any good, so I just didn't try." When he entered college at the

University of Tennessee Bradley's interest in the guitar picked up slightly. He said, "There was a guy that lived across the hall from me who played some Stevie Ray Vaughn and some classic rock. I learned some things from him…a Led Zeppelin tune and a fingerstyle Pink Floyd song."

The first "turning point" that inspired Bradley to develop more interest in learning how to play the guitar came when he heard Dave Matthews. Bradley said, "I thought that what Dave Matthews was doing was pretty cool. I got pretty dedicated during college to listen to Dave Matthews' rhythm and learn what he was doing. It was the first time in my life that I tried to sit down and really learn the details of any guitar music. Dave Matthews was the first person that I tried to study and copy."

In college Bradley majored in theater, however, his real love and passion was rock climbing. After leaving UT he moved to the mountains of North Carolina to work as an outdoor trip leader, taking people on rock climbing trips. He stayed in that job for about eight years and it was during those years that he fell in love with the guitar and flatpicking. Bradley said, "The first time that I heard Doc Watson, that was it!"

There was a lot of music in those North Carolina mountains and Bradley got a big dose of it when he moved in with a woman that he worked with named Shannon Whitworth. Although Shannon was not playing much music at the time, she would eventually move on to receive notoriety as a member of the Biscuit Burners and she is currently enjoying success as a solo artist. Bradley explains, "Shannon and I worked together and she had dated one of my best friends. After I had back surgery in 2000 I needed a place to recover. Shannon offered to let me stay at her place. She wasn't playing and singing very much at the time, but she had a lot of friends that played. She also worked at a record store and it was while I was staying with her that I first heard a Doc Watson recording. I couldn't believe that someone could play the guitar like that. I thought, 'This is the most perfect sound for an acoustic guitar.' I really didn't have much to do while I was recovering from surgery, there wasn't a television at the house. Shannon had a bluegrass guitar book and I started learning how to play 'Under the Double Eagle.' Sometimes local musicians would come over and jam and these people blew me away. I wanted to learn how to jam, so I was inspired to practice even harder and I started listening to everybody…Norman, Tony, Dan Crary, and anyone else I could find."

In February of 2001 Bradley and his girlfriend moved to Moab, Utah, to work in Arches National Park. While they were living in Moab, Bradley's girlfriend suggested that they go to the Telluride Bluegrass Festival. Bradley said, "I was blown away again but I didn't want to just want watch. I would get so restless watching all the musicians. I needed to learn how to play." Bradley was in Moab for less than a year when he decided to return to Tennessee and go back to college in Chattanooga. He said, "I started to get into bluegrass even more and I began taking bluegrass banjo lessons. One night I went to the Mountain Opry and saw a bluegrass band rehearsing and thought, 'I have to be in a bluegrass band! They were incredible.' That is when I started listening to more traditional bluegrass like Flatt & Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and John Hartford."

Bradley became so motivated to improve his music skills that he dropped out of school to "bury myself in music." Through a friend, he got a part time job leading sea kayak tours in St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands. While he was there he lived on a boat that was anchored off shore. Bradley recalls, "The boat that I lived on in St. Thomas was a 20 minute kayak ride from

land. I would sit out on that boat all day and practice guitar and banjo. I was obsessed! I had Geoff Howald's bluegrass banjo book and a Dan Crary flatpicking book as well as some theory books. Most days I would do nothing but practice and study."

While he was in the Caribbean, Bradley met a "phenomenal bluegrass player" named "Lightening Phil." Bradley said, "He could play anything...fiddle, mando, guitar…he was a boat Captain there in St. Thomas. His parents didn't let him watch TV as a kid, so he spent all his time learning how to play music." Bradley began participating in a bluegrass jam every week with Lightening Phil and he also met a singing duo, Douglas and Heather, who let him sit in with them during their shows. He also started performing at open mic events. He said, "I wrote about 20 tunes while I was on the boat in St. Thomas and I'd get up and perform my tunes whenever I could."

When he returned from the Caribbean, Bradley said that he realized "Music is what I should have been doing my whole life." He moved back to Nashville and took a few flatpicking lessons with Tyler Grant, started hanging out at the Station Inn, began attending jam sessions, and met other flatpickers, like former national champion Adam Wright. Bradley said, "Compared to a lot of those guys I was a total beginner, but it was a great experience and I got to listen to them jam."

After a short stay in Nashville, Bradley got a search and rescue job in Yosemite. That job led to a rope rigging job in Washington State. Once there, Bradley "fell in love with Seattle." He said, "There is a nice bluegrass scene in Seattle. It is more laid back than Nashville." Bradley has been in Seattle for nearly seven years. During that period of time he started teaching private banjo lessons and meeting local pickers. Though connections that he made at jam sessions he met the folks at the Dusty Strings music store and started teaching guitar and banjo at their music school two years ago. He teaches just about every day of the week, with two of those days being very full. Bradley also maintains a blog dedicated to music education (http://perfectnotes.blogspot.com/) and is writing and researching a book on how to practice.

At some point along the way it was natural for Bradley to start combining the strumming rhythm patterns that he learned when he was focused on Dave Matthews' rhythm playing with his flatpicking technique. He also wanted to fool around with some open tunings, so he wrote a few songs in DADGAD tuning that incorporated both strumming and single note picking. A few of his rock climbing friends liked the way the tunes sounded and decided to use a couple of Bradley's tunes in a rock climbing film. One of Bradley's original tunes was also used in an advertisement for rock climbing clothing.

In addition to writing his own tunes, Bradley began exploring traditional tunes in DADGAD tuning while incorporating various strumming patterns. He played a version of "Rueben's Train" using this technique in a local guitar contest and placed second. The guy who placed first commented to Bradley after the contest that he really liked that version of "Rueben's Train." That comment encouraged Bradley to continue working with his mix of flatpicking and rhythmic strumming in alternate tunings. Bradley said, "I wanted to try something different than the standard bluegrass model."

When Bradley recorded *The Real Job* CD he said that he was in the middle of recording a big rock music project and after recording music with a full band and drums he felt like he just wanted to go home and record a few simple solo guitar things on his laptop. He said, "I would go home and just record me playing my guitar whenever I felt like it. I wanted the CD to be a portrait of the things I could do at the time and I wanted to see if I could play in an open tuning by myself and make it sound musical. When I wrote these tunes I had a lot of rhythm technique, but not a lot of left hand technique."

Some of the original tunes on Bradley's CD are more rhythmic than melodic, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. The tunes have a great groove and so they really get your foot tapping and your head bobbing. Bradley said that he took a workshop with French-Algerian guitarist Pierre Bensusan and played one of his original compositions. Bensusan's comment was, "There is no melody!" On a few of the tunes, that may be true, however, I feel that sometimes a good groove is all you need to connect with music and there are plenty of good grooves on this recording. On this issues's audio CD companion we have included a cut from Bradley's CD. This is a medley of the tunes "Angeline the Baker" and "Leather Britches". The Real Job includes a total of eleven tracks. Nine of the eleven are Bradley Carter originals. The traditional tunes include the "Angeline the Baker/ Leather Britches" medley and "Rueben's Train."

While this may not be your standard flatpicking guitar CD, I think it a great example of what can be done when you pull together various techniques and musical influences and combine them with traditional flatpicking. The CD is well done and the musical variety is a welcome addition to the world of flatpicking guitar. I think that Bradley's use of the open tuning and the addition of rhythmic strumming variations is something that is especially effective when a flatpicker is playing in a solo setting. Bradley proves that on this CD.

On the pages that follow you will find a transcription of Bradley's first break to "Angeline the Baker." The second break is not transcribed. You will then find the first break to "Leather Britches." This arrangement is a pretty straight single note rendition. During the second "Leather Britches" solo, which is not transcribed, Bradley gets into a lot more of the strumming technique. Check it out on the audio recording and work to combine the arrangement that we present here with some full strums. 0

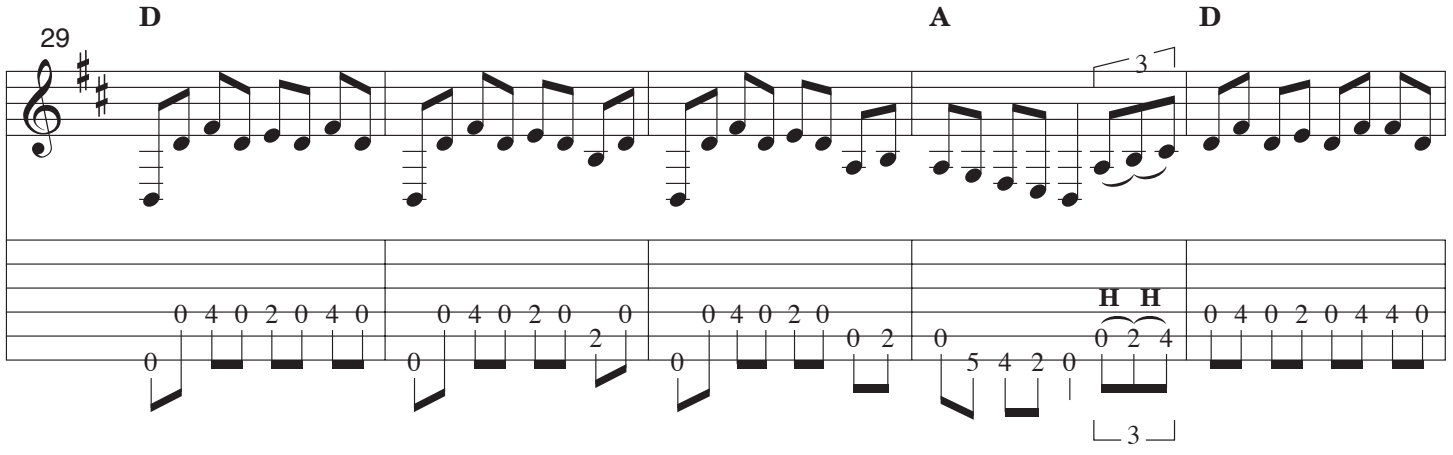
Audio CD
Track 30

Angeline the Baker/Leather Britches

Arranged by Bradley Carter

DADGAD Tuning

Leather Britches (First Solo)



Angeline the Baker/Leather Britches (con't)

Angeline the Baker/Leather Britches (con't)

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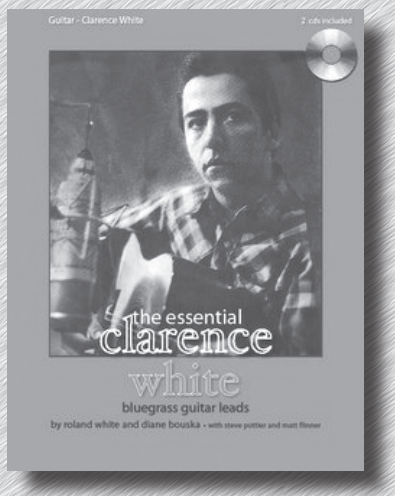

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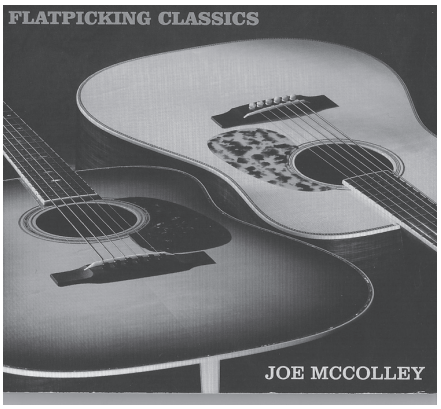
Reviews

Flatpicking Classics
Joe McColley



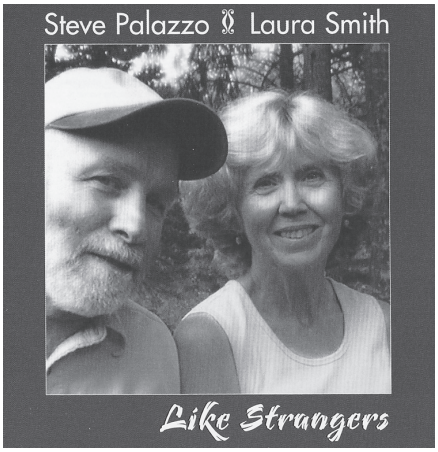
Reviewed by Chris Thiessen

For a guitarist, recording yourself is one of the most self-abasing and critical acts in the self-improvement arsenal. A digital recorder objectively captures and plays back all your deficiencies, leaving you no excuse but improvement. So the release of Joe McColley's CD *Flatpicking Classics* is very much a goal to celebrate. This collection of 14 tunes matches Joe in duets with Mark Cosgrove and Adam Wright (both Winfield winners) playing some of the more familiar tunes we might all play in jams, and very much holding his own in that august company.

Flatpicking Classics is a high-class project: the sound recording is precise, the balance is excellent, and even the packaging is excellent (with a minimum of plastic). If you're thinking of recording your own CD, *Flatpicking Classics* is a great model. And if you want to hear Joe talk more about the process of creating this CD, he's the subject of Flatpicking podcast #34 (www.flatpick.com/podcast.html).

Tune List: Big Sandy River; Lime Rock; Song for Emily; Ragtime Annie; Red-Haired Boy; Blackberry Blossom; Goodbye Liza Jane; Dixie Hoedown; Ragtime Annie; Alabama Jubilee; St. Anne's Reel; Forked Deer.

Like Strangers
Steve Palazzo & Laura Smith
Whiffletree Records WTR 165



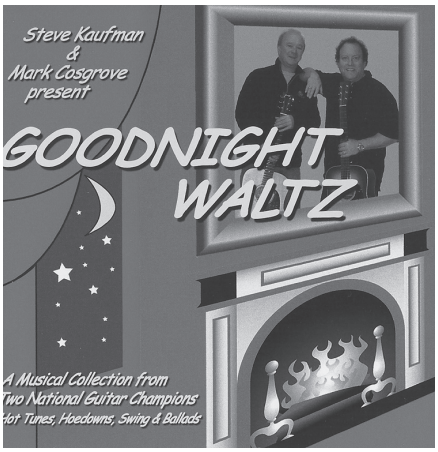
Reviewed by Chris Thiessen

While there are vocal selection on this CD, I will focus on the instrumental tracks in this review (this is, after all, *Flatpicking Guitar Magazine*), The instrumental work is superb. Occasional musical partners since 2000, Palazzo & Smith used that decade of interactivity to great advantage. Drawing content from a largely historical well (the Delmore Brothers, the Everly Brothers, the Blue Sky Boys, the Monroe Brothers, and the Carter Family), *Like Strangers* is a contemporary refashioning of the brother genre.

Two of my favorite tunes are medleys. The understated elegance and banjo/guitar note-for-note interplay in "Sandy River Belle/Little Rabbit" is magnificent, and "Black & White Rag/Dill Pickle Rag" provides a great example of perfectly paced ragtime fingerstyle and flatpicked guitar work.

Tune List: Fifty Miles of Elbow Room; Like Strangers; Sandy River Belle/Little Rabbit; You Are My Flower; Blues Stay Away From Me; Are You From Dixie; Cold Frosty Morning; Rose Of My Heart; Southern Moon; Lovers' Waltz; Little Darlin' Pal of Mine; Liza Jane; If I Could Only Win Your Love; A Beautiful Life; Black & White Rag/Dill Pickle Rag; My Creole Belle.

Goodnight Waltz
Steve Kaufman & Mark Cosgrove
Sleeping Bear Records 01232010

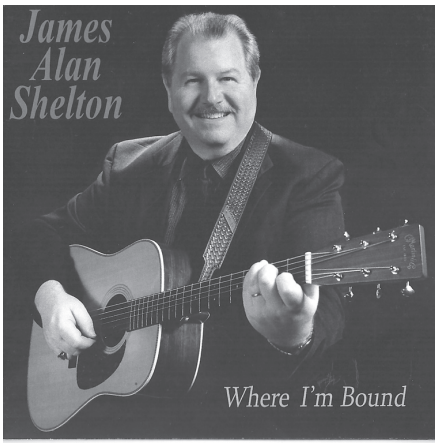


If you set aside the classes, and the camaraderie, and the late-night jam sessions, one of the best parts of Steve's Kamps are the nightly concerts, when instructors play with other musicians of their choosing. Inevitably at some point Steve is invited on

stage and a lot of flashy notes accompanied by witty repartee ensues. Well, certainly a lot of flashy notes. *Goodnight Waltz* is a lot like one of those concerts. Both Cosgrove and Kaufman are Winfield alums, and they play off each other (there's that witty repartee) at a stratospheric level and speed that leaves most of us gasping for breath. Which is not to say that this CD is not entertaining; their renditions of standard tunes are worth the price of admission. But if you're planning on picking up a lick or two, be sure to pack your favorite slow-downer software.

Tune List: Big Scioty; The Cuckoo's Nest; Old Dangerfield; Farewell Blues; Molly Bloom; Dayley's Reeel; Dixie Hoedown; Goodnight Waltz; Lonesome Fiddle Blues; Pan Handle Rag; The Girl I Left Behind Me/Texas Gales/Big Sandy River; Greenleaf Fancy; Angelina Baker; Sail Away Ladies; Dixie Breakdown

Where I'm Bound
James Alan Shelton
Sheltone Records SR-1962



Reviewed by Chris Thiessen

If you don't already have a James Alan Shelton CD (or two) in your musical library, you need to resolve that deficit. Here are two facts in evidence: Shelton is all about melody and all about tone. The resonance he pulls from his guitar is almost palpable and he backs that tonal expertise up with a strict adherence to a recognizable melody, even when he's taking that second or third break. Plus, he's so adept at his modified Carter style (which provides such a backbone of the Stanley sound) that he makes it seem simple and approachable. It's not until you try duplicating what he does that you fully grasp the level of artistry and expertise involved.

In *Where I'm Bound* Shelton presents some tunes that are going to be welcomed by long-time fans familiar with his work in the Ralph Stanley band and some which may surprise those folks. But that's all part of the plan: "I decided to stretch out a bit…" he writes in the liner notes. Consequently we have some traditional flatpick tunes ("Cherokee Shuffle" or "Home Sweet Home"), some folk songs (Woody Guthrie's "Pastures of Plenty," Peter, Paul & Mary's "All the Pretty Little Horses," or Tom Paxton's "Where I'm Bound"), some Stanley/Clinch Mountain style tunes ("Rose Conley," "Riding on the Clinchfield," or "Theme From Dillinger (The Old Gospel Ship)"), and then the stretch tunes ("Do You Hear What I Hear," "Buckaroo," "I'll Follow the Sun," "Catch the Wind," "Danny Boy," and "Auld Lang Syne"). Maybe the last two are not such a stretch: Bill Monroe recorded "Danny Boy" first around 1962

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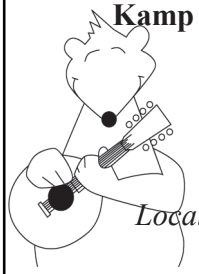

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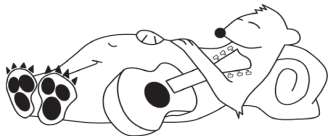

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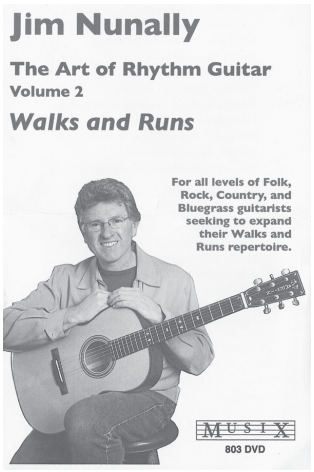
and "Auld Lang Syne" appeared on Bill Keith's 1976 S*omething Auld, Something Newgrass, Something Borrowed, Something Bluegrass* LP. But Shelton is correct: artistic stretch is the name of the game, especially when it's your studio.

The only cut that I could do without is "Catch the Wind." Musically it's executed well and Savannah Vaughn's voice is sweet, but for me this is an anthem from a different place and time, and does not benefit from the rework. Oddly, I don't feel that way about "I'll Follow the Sun."

As indicated on the CD liner notes, *Where I'm Bound* is the result of three years of recording effort in Shelton's home studio, where he laid down each tune track by track, playing everything but mandolin and fiddle. While I respect the effort involved, normally I'm less than overwhelmed by the result, which typically tends to be flat and lacks the spontaneity of live recordings. But again, Shelton's personal quest for tone has overcome my objections. I can only imagine how many tracks were left on the studio floor, but of all projects of this kind that I've heard, Shelton's is the best.

Tune List: Cherokee Shuffle; Rose Conley; Where I'm Bound; Riding on the Clinchfield; Theme from Dillinger (The Old Gospel Ship); Home Sweet Home; Pastures of Plenty; Buckaroo; All the Pretty Little Horses; Auld Lang Syne; Catch the Wind; I'll Follow the Sun; Do You Hear What I Hear?

The Art of Rhythm Guitar, Volume 2: Walks and Runs
Jim Nunally
MUSIX 803 DVD



Reviewed by Chris Theissen

When Jim released his DVD *The Art of Rhythm Guitar: Strums* (MUSIX 801 DVD) a few years back, I had the opportunity to review it, and proclaimed it a master's course in the art of the rhythm guitar. So the appearance of *Volume 2, Walks and Runs,* was a totally unexpected delight and immediately claimed the lion's share of my evening.

Ordinarily a refresher in the fundamentals of guitar playing would not thrill me, but imagine Jim Nunally knocking on your door and saying "hey, I've got about an hour between playing with John Reischman and David Grisman. Got some time to review walks and runs?" At that point I'm all in, because whatever Nunally shows me is going to improve my playing, regardless of how good I think I may be.

After some brief pointers about the left-hand pressure on the strings, right-hand control and pick thickness (as it relates to sound), and capo positioning, Jim begins discussing walks. These are the patterns that transition from one chord to another. Jim shows them at a moderate pace and repeatedly, with the implication that you will learn – ingrain – these so that you can perform them at any speed. Additionally, Nunally logically presents the walks, grouping A-D-E, C-F-G, and E-B7 walks so that you can immediately apply what you're being shown. Context! That's the key to successful use.

Likewise with runs: moderately demonstrated, each repeated several times, and shown with variations and exercises to help you recognize the context and likely application. In all, Jim runs through at least 40 walks and runs, which should keep any guitarist busy for a while.

My only criticism of this DVD is that it doesn't intentionally show right-hand pick direction. The demonstration of the walks and runs is well-paced and clear, but I also want to see how the right hand coordinates pick direction with the walks and runs, where Jim might place rest strokes or change pick direction, because that's a very large part of the Nunally style. Hmmm. Maybe those nuances are in Volume 3.

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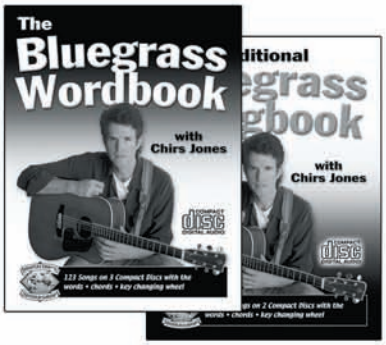

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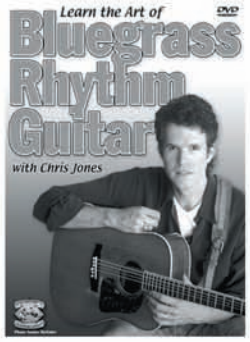

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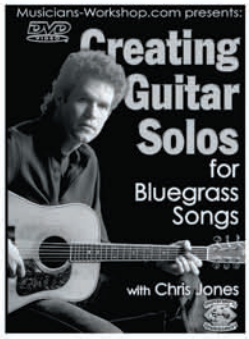

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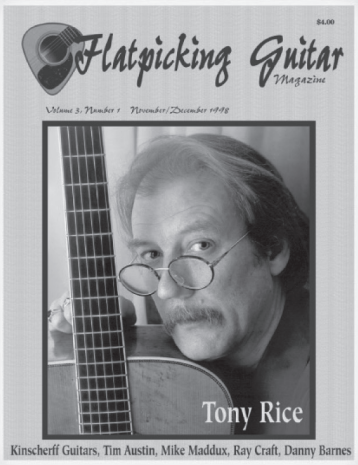

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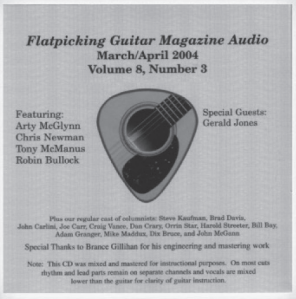

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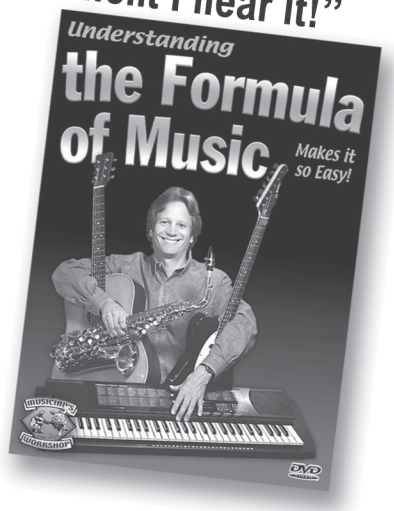

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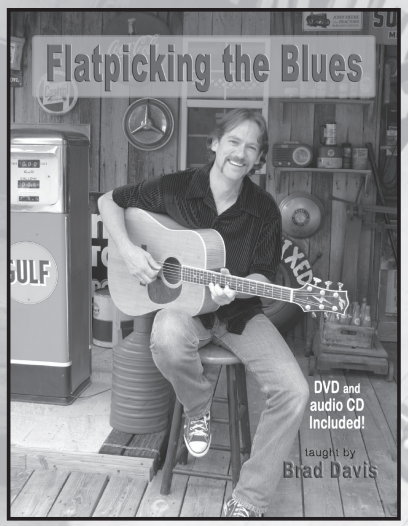

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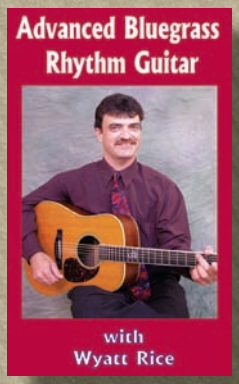

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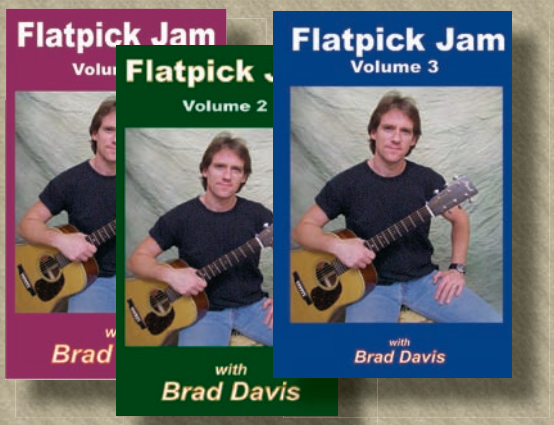

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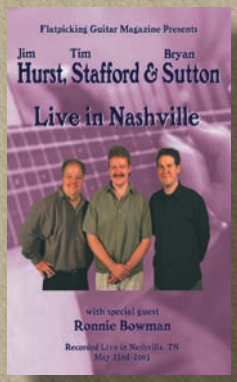

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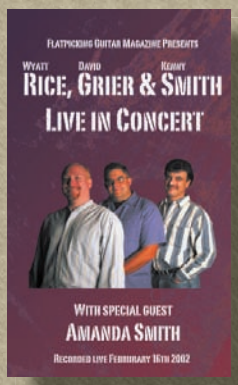

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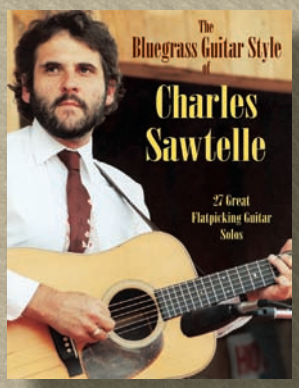

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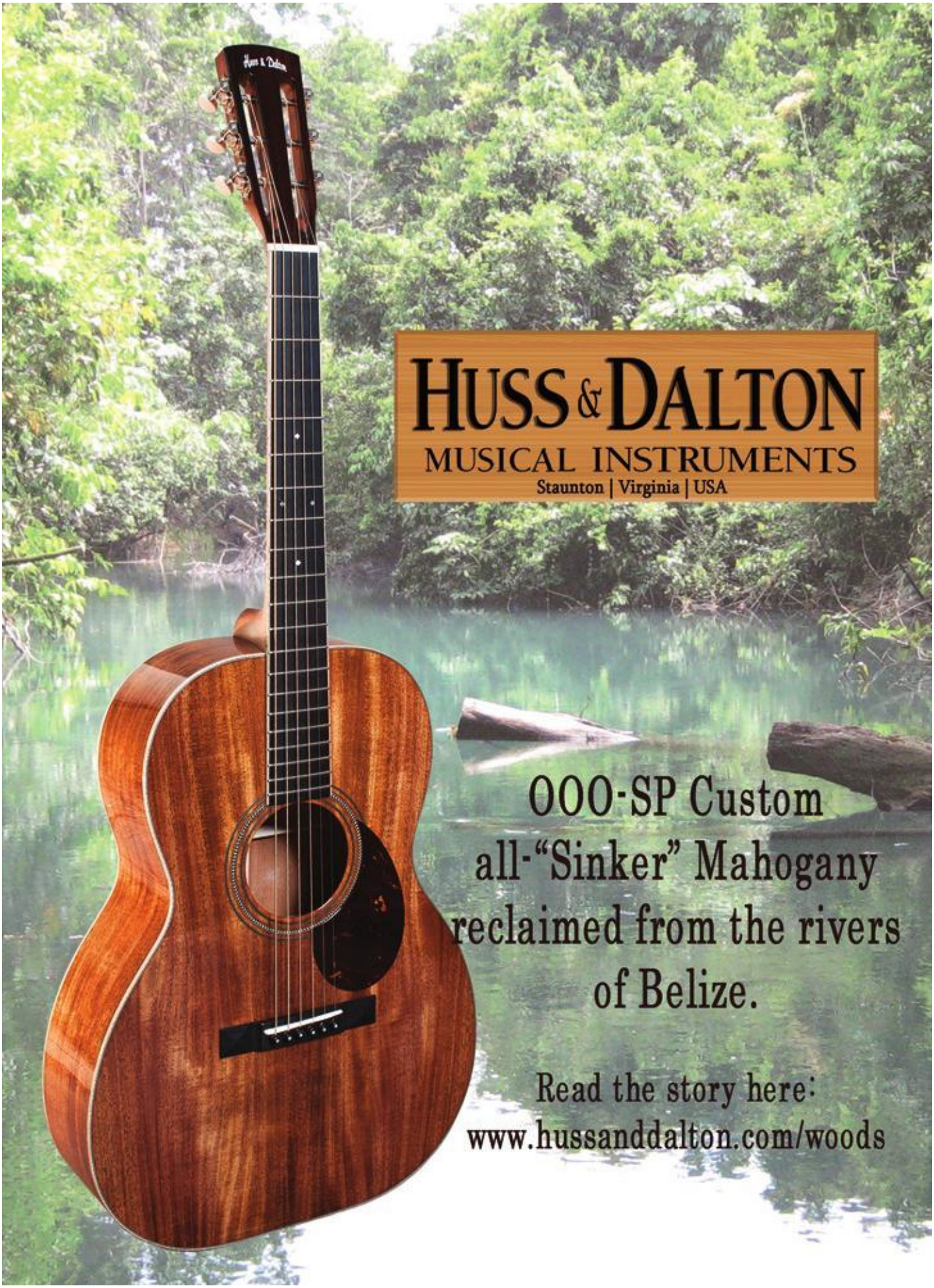
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